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UNEMPLOYMENT IN BELGIUM

DURING THE

GERMAN OCCUPATION

AND ITS GENERAL CAUSES

BY

FERNAND PASSELECQ

Director of the "Bureau Documentaire Belge" at le Havre, and Barrister of the Court of Appeal, Brussels

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

1917

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE contents of this pamphlet are a translation of part of the Introduction and of the whole of Chapters X. and XI. of a much larger work entitled LES DÉPORTATIONS BELGES À LA LUMIÈRE DES DOCUMENTS ALLEMANDS, by Fernand Passelecq. They constitute a complete and convincing account of the systematic and deliberate steps taken by the Germans to bring about unemployment and the paralysis of Belgian industries and so prepare the way for deporting workmen to Germany. German excuses for this barbarous procedure are examined in detail, and their hollowness is proved by reference to the matter published in Germany and elsewhere.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE.

INTRODUCTION xi

CHAPTER I.

Unemployment in Belgium and its General Causes 1

1.—THE EXTENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT 1

Statistics from German papers: Their value, 1.

2.—THE ORIGIN OF UNEMPLOYMENT. IS THE PARALYSIS OF BELGIAN INDUSTRY DUE TO THE BRITISH BLOCKADE? 2

The general responsibility of Germany as a result of her aggression, 2.—The influence of the British blockade, 3.—An exact statement of the question: Did Germany *guarantee* that she would keep to her engagements? 4.—The system in actual operation with regard to certain Belgian exports, and the proposal made by the Commission for Relief in Belgium for a system of contract, 4.—The British Memorandum of February 7-21, 1916, 5.—German official replies of February 22 and March 8, 1916, put forward arguments irrelevant to the matter at issue, 5.—The proposed arrangement was reasonable and eminently practical, 7.—Evidence from German sources (1915 and 1916) proving that at that time the British blockade was not, as Germans viewed it, an "insurmountable obstacle" to an economic revival in Belgium, 8.

3.—WAS UNEMPLOYMENT DUE TO PASSIVE RESISTANCE AND IDLENESS ON THE PART OF BELGIAN WORKMEN? 14

A.—*Belgian workmen's "passive resistance"* 14

Right of Belgian workmen to refuse German "war work," 15.—A practical rule for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable work, 16.—Had the Germans to gather in the harvest instead of Belgians? 16.—German evidence relating to each year of the occupation, 17.

B.—*Belgian workmen's "laziness"* 19

The Belgian workman is the builder of Belgium's prosperity, 19.—A dilemma, 20.

4.—THE REAL CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT: THE SYSTEMATIC EXHAUSTION OF BELGIAN ECONOMIC RESOURCES BY GERMANY 20

A.—*The Rathenau scheme* 21

Detailed German information concerning the conception and carrying out of the scheme, 22.

B.—*How the Rathenau scheme was applied in Belgium.—German orders with regard to economic matters since the beginning of the occupation* 24

(*a*).—*Industry and Commerce in regard to Belgium itself* 24

Table of returns, requisitions and seizures of merchandise, and of various measures relating to the industries, agriculture, and interior trade of Belgium. Based on the German *Moniteur Officiel* (October 26, 1914, to October 20, 1916), 25.—An example: Text of the decree of October 26, 1914, 29.—List of names of the principal products and materials covered by the decrees and orders referred to in the foregoing table, 31.

PAGE.

(*b*).—*Agriculture* 38

Summary, 38.—Requisitions of horses, 39.

(*c*).—*Industry and commerce in relation to foreign countries* 39

Table of German legislative measures relating to exporting, importing and transporting merchandise, from the beginning of 1915 to the end of September, 1916, 39.—List of names of the principal articles covered by these regulations, 40.

(*d*).—*Finance* 47

Summary of the German Government's financial policy, 47.—The extortion of the funds (430 million marks) of the Banque Nationale and the Société Générale de Belgique, 47.

C.—*Deliberate character of the measures taken by the German authorities in Belgium to bring about economic exhaustion....* 49

Anxiety to serve the interests of German trade competition, 49.—Reflections by neutral observers, 50.—Confessions of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1914 and of Dr. von Behr-Pinnow in 1915, 51.—Explicit assertion of Dr. Goetze on November 10, 1916, that the Belgian glass trade was suppressed by the German authorities at the instigation of German glass manufacturers, 53.—Admission by Governor-General von Bissing in regard to Belgian agriculture (February 27, 1915), 55.—The dispatch from the German Quartermaster-General on August 27, 1914, 57.—Admission by the *Vossische Zeitung* (January 8, 1915), 59.—Admission by Dr. L. Ganghofer (February, 1915), 59.—Admission by Deputy F. Hoff (July 13, 1915), 60.—Official statement by the Prussian Minister for War in the Reichstag (January 15, 1916), 61.—Conclusion, 61.

D.—The extent of the damage suffered by Belgium as a result of the economic policy of the German Government 62

Provisional calculation based on data supplied by German documents, 62.—War contributions, fines, support of German armies of occupation and in the field, 62.—Statistics of K. Ballod, 63.—The total impoverishment of the country as *acknowledged* exceeds 8 milliards of francs, 65.

CHAPTER II.

How Unemployment was Forced on Belgian Workmen 66

1.—How the Belgians Fought against Distress and Unemployment ... 66

A.—*Direct relief* 66

Struggle against misfortunes by the "country that will not die," 66.—The work of the National Committee of Relief and Food Supply, and of the American *Commission for Relief in Belgium*, 67.—The subsidies granted by the Belgian Government, 67.—The position of the population with regard to food, 67.

B.—*Compulsory technical instruction and relief work for the unemployed* ... 68

Organisation, during the summer of 1915, of technical instruction as a condition of direct assistance, 69.—Praise from the *Altonaer Nachrichten*. November 3, 1915, 69.

2.—Manœuvres and Decrees of the German Authorities to Paralyse Belgian Efforts 71

Failure of the scheme for general technical instruction through the action of the German authorities, 72.—Series of German decrees forbidding relief work for the unemployed: Proclamations of August 14 and 15, 1915, and May 2 and 15, 1916, 73.—English Note of July 8, 1916, 78.—Reply from Wolff, July 16, 1916, 81.—Respect shown by the German authorities for International Law in the application of the decrees: Decree of General von Unger, October 12, 1915, 82.

PAGE.

3.—How the German Authorities set to Work to Create Unemployment: the Example of the Province of Luxembourg 83

Value of the excuses alleged for interfering with relief work for the unemployed, 84.—Hitherto unpublished Belgian Note on the province of Luxembourg, with documents in support thereof, 84.

4.—The German Authorities, after Reducing Men to Idleness, Transport them to Germany 90

Value of the argument based on the cost of relief work for the unemployed, 91.—The three acts of the administrative tragi-comedy, 92.

INTRODUCTION.

On October 3, 1916, a decree by the German Great Headquarters instituted, in the occupied part of Belgium, a *régime* of forced labour, with deportation, for all unemployed persons living at another person's expense.

As a matter of fact, it was a general measure made with a military purpose and applicable indiscriminately to the whole able-bodied population of the occupied territory. So far, the male population only have been affected by the measure. Deportations began about half-way through October, 1916, and are still being carried out at the time of writing. They are executed with great severity and in a manner which betrays a perfectly worked out administrative preparation.

The German Administration encountered the passive resistance and the protests of the Belgian burgomasters and aldermen, but took no notice of them. It disregarded also the very strong representations made to it by leading men belonging to or living in the country, notably representatives of politics, science, business and industry, of the Court of Appeal and the other judicial bodies of Belgium, and, finally, those of the Belgian Episcopacy made through the mouth of Cardinal Mercier.

The deported persons are not "out-of-works" in all cases; they include workmen snatched from their regular occupations, persons belonging to the lower middle class, men with independent businesses, members of the liberal professions, and people who were rich or in easy circumstances. They were summoned—in some cases

individually, in others in a body—from seventeen upwards, generally without any limit of age, or seized promiscuously, when met with in the street, in a manner that recalls slave-raids. They have been herded together and deported by brute force in large gangs, under transport conditions of great inhumanity.

One need only possess an ordinary human heart to realise what anguish was suffered by these victims hauled off into the unknown and by their relations. Even those who have been spared for the time being live the tortured life of people who believe they have everything to fear and are without means of escape.

It can be stated with absolute truthfulness that the proclamation of October 3, 1916, means the infliction on the whole Belgian nation—already cruelly hit by the various disasters of invasion and the numberless evils of a long occupation—of an increase in moral and material suffering which is absolutely undeserved and so bitter that it seems impossible to imagine any worse for civilised beings.

How many Belgians have been deported in this fashion? It is difficult to say, for, at the time of collecting the materials for this publication, the deportations are being continued without respite. Up to the present several tens of thousands of unfortunates are said to have been carried off. About November 10 the total was already estimated at 100,000. Some highly-placed Germans declare in Belgium that they mean to seize 200,000 to 300,000 persons, or even more. Between October 15 and 24, 1916, more than 15,000 persons had been removed from Flanders alone; and it is evident that, if the measure has been applied on the same scale in Brussels, Liége, Charleroi, and the other great centres of industrial and agricultural population—Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp and Mons, for example—the number of the deported will soon mount to hundreds of thousands and make good the German boast.

Most of the deported are carried off into Germany; a few into the north of France. They are employed under compulsion on all kinds of work not authorised by International Law (work which will help the German army directly or indirectly), and under conditions which humanity condemns (in places exposed to the artillery fire of the Allies).

What Germany has organised in Belgium, then, is nothing more or less than "white slavery." The world is faced by an official attempt to reintroduce enslavement among the customs of war, and an enslavement which is worse than the African, since in this case the seizures of human cattle are practised systematically among the non-combatant population of a civilised race by a great modern State proud of its culture.

The Belgian Government is convinced that, in the planning and carrying out of this scheme, Germany was influenced by motives of strategic interest. By every possible means, and without respecting the ordinances of natural or international law, she has determined to get for herself a complementary or substitutional labour force which will enable her to return to her armies an equal number of German workmen who are at present withdrawn from active military service.

The German Administration in occupied Belgium denies that this is the case. If one may believe the statement made by Governor-General von Bissing to the representative of the *New York Times*, and sundry Official German Notes, Germany, in organising forced labour and the violent deportation of Belgians, has only—out of a deep regard for humanity and moral health—fulfilled the duty laid upon the occupying Power by the Hague Conventions to maintain public order and social interests in the regions occupied, which are imperilled by the spread of unemployment in Belgium. The Belgians themselves and the English,

according to these apologists, are responsible for this cessation of work—the Belgians, through their idleness and the bad reception given to all offers of employment by Germany; the English, through the ban imposed upon the importation of the raw materials indispensable to Belgian industries. Far from complaining, the argument goes on, the Belgian people ought to thank the German authorities for the humane services rendered, without fear of criticism and "What will people say?", and for not hesitating to protect it, by force if necessary, from the evil consequences of its laziness and the improvidence of the Belgian authorities and from a general aggravation of its sufferings.

This apology, besides being quite unsupported by facts, is utterly devoid of sincerity.

The Belgian working-class cannot justly be accused of laziness. It is one of the most industrious in the world, and has helped to place Belgium in the first rank of industrial nations and keep her there.

Ever since the country was first occupied it has never refused any work except such as would, by its very nature, be of military service to the enemy. Belgian manufacturers have taken the same line. They certainly cannot be found fault with under this head—by Germany least of all—since, by the terms of the War Regulations attached to the Fourth Hague Convention, which define the legal status of the occupying Power in its legislative capacity, the latter may not force the population of occupied territory to assist the operations of its armies.

The British blockade certainly is not responsible for the stagnation of business that has come about in Belgium. A reasonable and practical scheme to arrange the importation of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods was laid before the German authorities in August, 1915, with the sanction of the British Government. For more than five months the reply of the German authorities was awaited

in vain. When the British Government made this strange attitude generally known (February, 1916), Germany tried to justify herself by pleading excessive demands on the part of England, demands which she had not discussed or even considered. The blockade, then, was not the cause of economic inactivity in Belgium.

On the contrary, evidence is furnished by German administrative documents relating to the carrying out of the decree of October 3, 1916; by the general character of the regulations issued during a period of two years by the German authorities in Belgium; and, finally, by official statements published in the German Press before and after the measure, which prove that the increase of unemployment, made an excuse for instituting forced labour and deportation, is the deliberate and reasoned work of Germany herself.

In fact, not to mention her responsibility for the results of her attack, Germany is accountable for the use she has made in Belgium of the legislative powers acquired by virtue of her position as occupying Power. Now, the many decrees which she has issued are of such a kind as inevitably to result in paralysing industry, labour and commerce, and in drying up economic activity at the source.

By a series of very detailed proclamations, backed by heavy penalties, the Germans have seized in succession all raw materials stocked or produced in the country—among others, wool, flax, textiles, leather and all products essential to the metallurgical and chemical industries, etc. Furthermore, they have seized a considerable number of machines, parts of machines, and machine tools. They have removed the copper and lubricating oils from many industrial plants, and have made driving belts, etc., liable to declaration.

Most of these seizures have been followed by removal and transference to Germany.

By these decrees, all bearing the signature of a Governor-General who none the less protested his sincere

intention of working for a revival of economic life in the country, Belgian industrial production has been paralysed.

Commerce in turn has been fettered: First, by the constant creation of "Buying Centres" monopolising the exchange and distribution of materials, produce and articles liable to seizure or declaration. There is also good reason to think that in many cases this institution of "Centres" has resulted—if not intentionally—in concealing the secret removal of Belgian products and manufactures which legally ought to be kept for home consumption. Second, by the general dislocation of business caused by the uninterrupted succession of decrees of seizure and the repeated non-fulfilment by the German authorities of promises made by the Governor-General. Third, by the numberless trammels laid on economic activity; the general enforcement of passports, even outside military areas; obstacles to travelling about the country by land or water; general requisitioning of all means of traction; the enforcement of a system of paid-for permits in all commercial transactions; an embargo on importation extended to some products (such as soap and sebaceous goods), the disposable stocks of which in Holland Germany wishes to keep for her own use; prohibitions, crippling taxes, and various regulations concerning export, intended to deprive certain Belgian industries (coal, iron and glass) of the last foreign markets open to them and to benefit German competition.

Agriculture has been treated almost as badly. Breeding —horse-breeding particularly—has been ruined by constant requisitions. In some districts so many horses and cattle have been removed that agricultural operations have become impossible.

Similarly, steps were taken which, in contrast with those already mentioned, were aimed directly at the interests of labour. In order to be prepared to deal with the considerable increase in unemployment resulting from these

measures, Belgian local authorities had organised direct help for the unemployed, set on foot a scheme of compulsory technical education for them, and authorised works of public utility (the construction and repair of roads, the excavation of docks, and the raising of earthworks, etc.). The province of Luxembourg had applied this last measure everywhere. But the opposition of the German authorities wrecked the scheme of compulsory technical instruction, and in August, 1915, and May, 1916, German regulations were issued: (1) To empower the German authorities to penalise Belgian workmen who should refuse to assist them with their labour; (2) to enable them to stop at will all "relief works" on the pretext that this "unproductive expenditure" would be a heavy financial burden on the communes and provinces.

This recall of the Belgian authorities to financial prudence was surely an impertinence on the part of the German command, since at the very same moment the latter was keeping the Belgian provinces loaded with a permanent war contribution of 40,000,000 francs a month, levied since December, 1914, in addition to ordinary imposts, and increased by the ordinance of November 20, 1916, to 50,000,000 francs a month.* On the other hand, Germany contributes nothing, either to the costs of public relief in Belgium or even to the supply of food for the people. Belgian funds alone, helped by the generosity of Belgians and foreigners, provide for the first, and, as for the food supply, it is guaranteed by the Commission for Relief in Belgium, administered by Americans, the financing of which is dependent at once on voluntary contributions from various countries and on a regular subsidy of 25,000,000 francs a month granted since October, 1915, by the Belgian Government. Putting that aside for the moment, it is unquestionable that the German command, by its two

* Increased to 60,000,000 francs a month by a decree of March 21, 1917. (Translator's Note.)

ordinances of May, 1916, deprived the Belgian authorities of all means of themselves solving the labour problem: the Belgian workman was reduced definitely to the condition of being *compulsorily unemployed*.

The chief causes of the increase in unemployment and distress in Belgium cannot, then, be sought elsewhere than *in the deliberate legislative acts of the occupying Power*. In very truth *it is the German command which has artificially brought about or increased unemployment in Belgium*. Its measures for paralysing the Belgian endeavour to check unemployment had a double motive. The German command had cherished the hope of thus bringing about the enrolment of Belgian workmen in its war industries, either in Belgium, or, by emigration, in Germany. When this scheme failed, it found, in that very increase in unemployment for which it was itself responsible, an excuse for starting forced labour and wholesale deportation.

It is worth remarking that the same tactics were used simultaneously by the German Administration to gain possession of the money in the Belgian banks. It adopted a financial policy which inevitably led to the accumulation and "unemployment" of marks in the coffers of these banks; and then, pretending that it was against the country's interests to keep the money thus idle, it laid hands on the banks' funds and decreed their compulsory investment—in Germany.

After all, the real aim of this policy of systematic imposition pursued in Belgium by the German Administration is fully exposed when its doings are compared with the general scheme of economic organisation adopted at Berlin at the outbreak of the war, on the suggestion of W. Rathenau; especially when one notes the singular coincidence of the decree of October 3, 1916, in Belgium with similar decrees published in Lithuania, Poland and other districts occupied by the armies of Germany and her

allies, and the promulgation in Germany of an Imperial law organising compulsory civil service on military lines.

It was admitted officially in the Reichstag, in November, 1916, that this coincidence was not due to mere chance. It becomes impossible, then, to maintain that a measure so generally applied and so entirely to the advantage of Germany was dictated to the German Administration in Belgium by a sincere and disinterested regard for the peculiar conditions of that State. The German argument not only outrages truth; it is even incompatible with an assumption of good faith.

The fact is, that *the decree to deport Belgians to Germany to work there under compulsion is essentially a measure inspired by consideration of German military interest.*

An examination into the value and sincerity of German explanations resolves itself into asking a few very simple questions:

Is it true that the spread of unemployment in Belgium is due on the one hand to the British blockade, and on the other to the laziness and passive resistance of the Belgian working class?

Is it true that there was no remedy for the present situation except the organising of forced labour, with deportation?

Is it true that the German Government, when instituting the last, was actuated only by a sincere wish to assist the Belgian population and to do for it what good social administration and humanity demanded?

These points will be examined, above all, in the light thrown on them by German documents.

CHAPTER I.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN BELGIUM AND ITS GENERAL CAUSES.

1.—The Extent of Unemployment.

NO OFFICIAL statistics of present unemployment in the occupied parts of Belgium have been published; and nothing is more difficult to arrive at (especially during a critical period resulting from the war and the German occupation), owing to the essentially shifting character of the population affected by unemployment and to the number of relief organisations. Moreover, unemployment must not be confused with the giving of relief, as relieved persons are not unemployed workmen in all cases.

In July, 1916, the Dutch newspapers published a statement based, it was said, on recent information given by the National Committee for Relief and Food Supply, according to which 666,349 men, 552,000 women, and 142,000 children—1,360,349 persons in all—were in receipt of official and regular relief.

According to the Brussels correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (issue of August 2, 1916), the figures should have been larger; but perhaps the discrepancy is due to a fresh classification and to the addition of categories which were not included in the totals originally published. The following are the data of the German paper:

In June, 1916, the total number of people relieved in Belgium by the National Committee of Relief and Food Supply amounted to 1,585,379. This total was made up as follows:

669,966 men (unemployed)
309,902 women ,,
605.511 children below 16 years of age

1,585,379

On September 14, 1916, the *Vossische Zeitung* (morning edition) published an official article, which was spread broadcast among the whole of the German and foreign Press by the activities of German propagandism. Here it is:

How many Unemployed are there in Belgium?

At the end of June, 1916, there were without employment in the occupied Belgian territory 666,913 men, 309,552 women, and 587,132 children below sixteen years of age. The Brussels area alone accounts

for 69,072 men, 32,416 women, and 41,400 children. These figures, which certainly are not underestimated, may be explained by the fact that unemployment is somewhat attractive to Belgians because the American Committee of Relief (the National Committee for Relief and Food Supply) makes life easy for the unemployed by its "unemployment funds." It has already paid out 146,500,000 francs, including 14,423,000 francs in Brussels and its neighbourhood.

In the course of May it paid Belgian unemployed 11,961,675 francs, including 1,078,500 francs at Brussels. To families robbed of their homes by the war it has disbursed 120,000,000 francs, including 14,086,040 paid out in Brussels.

It is evident that these data do not tally. We do not know their basis, and have not been able to check them, so we give them merely as approximate and with all proper reservations.

On the other hand, let us observe that Cardinal Mercier, in his protest dated November 7, 1916, estimates the number of *assisted unemployed* at about 400,000; that General von Bissing, in an interview, puts it at 400,000 to 500,000; while M. Vandervelde, in a letter to the International Socialist Bureau, speaks of about 600,000 unemployed. A memorandum (November, 1916), from a Belgian living in Belgium, and so placed as to be able to speak with authority, says:

The workmen who have been reduced to idleness in Belgium do not number 600,000, if one reckons only men in these figures. Their number does not reach 350,000; the exact total is 346,989. There are, in addition, a certain number of so-called *partly* unemployed, who obtain work only very intermittently.

We regard this memorandum as showing things exactly as they are. The light which it sheds allows us to reconcile the real or apparent contradictions in other evidence.

Such as it is, unemployment in occupied Belgium is a serious matter, though not amounting to an actual catastrophe, as recent articles in the German papers would have us believe. Our opinion on this point is strengthened when one sets against the figures quoted the efforts made by the Belgians to stay the advance of the scourge.

What is the exact cause of the situation just described?

2.—The Origin of Unemployment. Is the Paralysis of Belgian Industry due to the British Blockade?

One cause must evidently be regarded as incontestable. Stagnation of business in Belgium is primarily and directly a result of the war—that is to say, of *German aggression*. The latter was described in the Reichstag on August 4, 1914, by the Chancellor

of the German Empire as "an act *contrary to right,*" which Germany "*undertook to give reparation* for" as soon as possible. Germany knew that, when brought before the bar of History, she could not evade the natural consequences of this fundamental injustice under the pretext that account must also be taken of the embargo laid by Britain on the importation of raw materials. Certainly we may concede hypothetically to the Germans their way of stating the problem in order to be able to reason with them over its solution. Nevertheless, this is not the place for an exhaustive discussion, from a legal point of view, of the blockade, or rather the naval and maritime policy of Great Britain.

To begin with, even if what Germany says were true and her accusations well founded, they would not give her the right—as Cardinal Mercier remarks—to revenge herself on the Belgians by deporting them and subjecting them to forced labour in Germany. We must, then, avoid ambiguity; and what we have to do here is not to seek, in a theoretical manner, for a scientific explanation of the stoppage of Belgian industry, but above all to establish a case of responsibility while paying attention to the laws of history. Even if it be granted that the British "blockade" has materially affected the industrial situation in Belgium, the important point will still be to see whether it was not possible to escape its grasp.

The Germans seem to think that all the responsibility lies upon England, simply because the blockade depends on her good pleasure, and she is apparently free to end it when, where and how she likes. This is a false statement of the case and purely theoretical reasoning. The responsibility for the refusal to raise the blockade in Belgium's interests ought to be considered in the light of two fundamental facts, viz.: (1) that Belgium is an invaded district occupied by an enemy, the German Empire, which is also England's enemy; (2) that this enemy pretends to derive from its title of occupant not merely the right to take from Belgian territory whatever may be needed to support the troops of occupation, but that of exploiting the country to its full extent, as if it were an uncivilised country conquered once and for all. Later on we shall find the proof of their unreasonable expectations.

The question of deciding whether England, fighting and struggling as she is for Belgium's salvation at that country's side, *can*, consonantly with her obligations to that cause and to the common military policy of the Allies, supply Belgian industries or allow them to be supplied with raw materials, comes to this: Were *genuine* guarantees offered by Germany giving assurance that, though herself blockaded, she would not use the imported foodstuffs to improve her own military situation?

When Governor von Bissing says that he has done everything possible to get England to admit raw materials into Belgium, either his words *should* imply that he has offered guarantees of the kind required or they are quite irrelevant.

Now what are the facts?

Germany offered—so said General von Bissing—to "enter into an engagement that the products of Belgian industry thus rendered possible (by importation subsequently authorised) should not be used by Germany and that they should be exported to the extent of 75 per cent."

To "enter into an engagement" is simply to *bind oneself*—nothing more or less. But, as coming from a State which has established "Not kennt kein Gebot" as a rule of conduct, from a contracting party which claims to be not legally bound by its own signature the moment that its strategic interests—of which it is the only judge—prompts its repudiation, an offer made to an opponent to *be bound* in this fashion appears indeed to the latter to be mere empty words or an act calculated to deceive. In this case *obligation* goes for nothing; *carrying-out* is everything, and to this end *guarantees* alone have any value.

We insist, then, on asking: "Where are the *guarantees* offered by Germany to assure England that the proposed engagement would be carried out?"

The Governor and official Germany are dumb on this point. Let us go on now to prove the contrary case. What conditions concerning guarantees were allowed by the scheme of arrangement submitted in August-September, 1915, to the German authorities with England's approbation?

The scheme originated from a group of Belgian manufacturers, associated in a Committee, and the Commission (American) for Relief in Belgium. It allowed the importation of raw materials needed for the operations of Belgian factories, selected from among those which employed the greatest number of men, and unrestricted exportation of articles made from these raw materials, provided that the said materials should be used only in these factories and that goods exported should be of exclusively Belgian manufacture. The German authorities were to abstain from subjecting to requisitions, forced sale, or compulsion to work in their interests these factories, their materials, output, plant and staff. As a general guarantee that these conditions should be observed, the scheme provided for the appointment of a neutral control, exercised on the spot by the Commission for Relief in Belgium which was already engaged at Brussels in maintaining a supply of provisions under the patronage of the United States, Spain and Holland. As a

special guarantee the net proceeds of the business were to be deposited and held in a neutral bank until the end of the war; but under three reservations which would enable the combine to effect its purpose in Belgium without impairing the blockade. They were:—

1. The Relief Commission should be entitled, on account of the deposit, to make use in Belgium for the succour of the necessitous population of the receipts from the sale of imported foodstuffs.

2. The excess difference between the said deposit lodged and the sums thus spent should constitute security for an interior loan in Belgium, to enable the manufacturers to regulate their general expenses and wage-bills.

3. The first 2,500,000 francs in excess of the deposit should constitute a permanent pledge for the proper observance of the conditions by the Belgian factories patronised.

This proposal met with *no response*. The Commission for Relief and the Belgian manufacturers made endless inquiries to ascertain Germany's attitude towards it; but without any result. At last, after waiting *more than five months*, the British Government made the matter public, and fixed the onus in a Memorandum of the Foreign Office, dated February 7, and published in the *Times* of February 21, 1916. Only then did Germany make up her mind to break the silence—to declare that England put forward inacceptable claims. In his interview, Governor-General von Bissing actually describes them as "absolutely uneconomic conditions."

Uneconomic; what are we to understand by that? The Governor does not explain himself. To reveal his meaning he has recourse to two formal Notes issued by the German Government on February 22 and March 9, 1916, in reply to the British Memorandum of February 7-21.

The reasoning of these formal Notes may be summed up thus:

"The British Government is not acting straightforwardly. It merely aims at laying hands on Belgian industry by demanding certificates of origin which would amount to disguised commercial espionage benefiting British commerce; and at ruining Belgian industry and helping British competition, while locking up all the proceeds of the transactions in an English bank. In this way Belgium would purchase raw materials and export manufactured goods; but no money would come back to her, not even for paying wages, and her manufacturers would be heading straight for bankruptcy."

The reader will certainly be amazed by the discrepancy between this reasoning and the proposed arrangement stated above. As a matter of fact it is the German Official Note which

shows *bad faith*, for in the first part it finds fault with the British Memorandum for concealing the clauses of the proposal and pretending to make them public. The Note puts forward as the clauses of the proposal—inaccurately and with omissions, be it noted—certain conditions which actually were those of earlier provisional regulations, which the British Government had put in force in the absence of a two-party control, to make possible the exportation of various kinds of goods. For these the proposal of the Commission for Relief simply wished to substitute a contractual scheme.

As a result of this mistake, the formal German Note foists on the Belgo-American proposal certain conditions which do not appear in it; among others the locking up of the proceeds of the business *in an English bank*, although the scheme spoke only of *a neutral bank*. On the other hand, it says not a word about certain important conditions which are drawn up there. For example: the handing to the Commission for Relief of a certificate of the deposit lodged in the bank; the consequent permission to set off against part of the deposit the expenses incurred in Belgium in relieving distress by reducing the price of food sold in the country; permission given to the Industrial Belgian Committee patronised by the Commission for Relief to effect loans from the balance of the deposit to enable it to meet the general expenses and wage-bills of the factories.

These clauses, which are the pith of the proposed combine, appear nowhere in the pretended exposure made by the official German Note.

What is the reason of this inaccurate representation of the ideas underlying the discussion? Is it a mistake or unintentional confusion that the draughtsman of the Official German Note is guilty of? Or did the German Government wish deliberately to state the case in a deceitful manner in order to gain, in the eyes of a badly-informed public, the advantage resulting from an apparently conclusive, but actually misleading, refutation?

We should prefer here not to abandon the supposition of good faith; but we must maintain that, if confusion has arisen, it is inexcusable in the face of the plain terms of the British Memorandum. This distinguishes clearly and even contrasts, by various stages, the provisional scheme of conditions actually imposed upon certain exports with the contractual schemes it was proposed to substitute for it.

His Majesty's Government (this is distinctly stated in the Memorandum of February 7-21, 1916, to which the German Note is a reply) understands fully the need for assisting the Belgian people: that is the reason of its

supporting the *Commission for Relief in Belgium* [Food supply service] and allowing Belgium to export trade goods under certain conditions [a system of conditions *de facto* of a provisional and one-sided character]. That, too, is the reason why it decided some months ago [in August, 1915] to make known its intention of examining the proposals [of the Industrial Committee and of the *Commission for Relief*] with a view to importing into Belgium necessary raw materials, under the control of an agency [the Belgian Industrial Committee] and under the guarantee of the *Commission for Relief* [the contractual system which would replace the *de facto* system].

The distinction is clear enough: it cannot possibly have escaped the German Government at the time of handing in its Official Note, which had matured slowly during the fortnight that elapsed between February 21 and March 8, 1916.

If, now, one puts the question of good faith on one side, the Official German Note still lacks all relevance. All the arguments which it develops fall to the ground when faced with the actual conditions of the scheme which were to be discussed. We may therefore simply disregard them and confine ourselves to stating below in a general way the essential points:

1. By lodging the proceeds of the transactions in a neutral bank England intended to rescue these additions to Belgian capital from the danger of fresh requisitions, fines, forced contributions, or loans, whereof they could have been the object or pretext—to the benefit of the military strength of the occupying Power.

2. The locking-up of the funds need not prevent the Belgian manufacturers from enjoying the benefit of their operations in the form of credit, nor from meeting, by means of an internal loan secured by this external credit, their general expenses and wages.

3. The operation of clearing and transfer which must accompany the deposit would have allowed the *Commission for Relief* and the Belgian Industrial Committee not only to keep industry comparatively active in Belgium, but to increase the means of assisting the balance of compulsorily unemployed men who might be considered deserving of help.

On the whole, this very ingenious combination conformed with the principles of sane industrial and financial economics. One could not wish for better proof of this than the fact that Belgian manufacturers, merchants and bankers—who surely are the best judges of their own interests—helped to work out the details of the scheme.

But can it be said that it was impracticable? What can be known about it by an occupying Power which has not even been

ready to give it a trial, though the Belgians asked that they should do so? In short, what was aimed at was merely to extend to importation and exportation of manufactured goods and raw materials the powers of the *Commission for Relief* which for nearly two years had given—and still gives—satisfaction to interested parties in regard to maintaining a food supply, and which England had exempted permanently from blockade.

In any case, this business was in train; why did not Germany follow it up? *Six months later* she criticises the proposal; but where is her counter-proposal, not of conditions but of *guarantees* for respecting conditions?

On this point, again, von Bissing has not a word to say.

Once more we must press the point and ask: "What *deeper reason* had Germany for refusing the setting up of *any* control, when a control had been set up and was working smoothly and easily in connection with the food supply? As long as Germany does not give a satisfactory explanation of this, one will be justified in concluding that she did not really intend, should the blockade be raised partially, to allow Belgian industry the full fruits of renewed activity.*

Belgians in Belgium are still under the impression that their industries were but a kind of hostage in German hands during these abortive negotiations. Germany used Belgium's needs only as a lever to compel England to make the meshes of her blockade wider. Once face to face with a definite proposal, agreed to by England, and one which must effectively restore Belgian industries—but which confined to Belgium the advantages of raising the blockade—Germany refused to answer for almost half a year, and so, without making any counter-proposal, brought about the breaking off of negotiations.

There is another sufficiently good way of estimating indirectly the exaggeration in which the German authorities indulge when they throw on to the British blockade the whole onus of "the economic strangling" of Belgium, and this is to examine what the German Press, working to order under censorship, said in 1914, 1915, and even in 1916, about the economic situation in Belgium.

The plan pursued then was just the same as the present one. The Belgians were complaining bitterly about the damage done by the invasion and the evils resulting from the German occupation. It was therefore important to prove to neutral peoples that these

* In this connection let us remember that the negotiations about revictualling Poland with American wheat failed in just the same way and for a similar reason. Germany refused to have anything to do with the setting up of a diplomatic or neutral control. In this case, too, she pretended that England must be satisfied with the "plighted word" of the German Empire.

complaints were unjustified; that Germany had entered Belgium to clean out Augean stables; that scarcely had she grasped the reins of power when the economic revival grew and flourished to some extent under *German order and German organisation;* that the German genius alone could bring good out of evil in this way; that renewed prosperity was rising on the ruins unavoidably resulting from war; and that a new era was opening in a manner which augured well for the promising future of a country destined to enter the German Zollverein when German arms should have won the victory.

For twenty months, after as well as before the beginning of the blockade, these views were served up to readers of the German Press, and of German news sent to neutral countries. The Belgian Office of Records has collected about a hundred articles written on these enchanting subjects in German papers, and in those of the pro-German Press of neutral countries. They will astonish future historians of the Great War.

Let us select at random a few quotations from our files.

The *Kölnische Zeitung* (November 27, 1914) says that the economic situation in Belgium, although it shows signs of improvement, is still a difficult one, because the workmen have patriotic scruples and refuse to begin work again. The German paper implores them not to persist in this refusal, which it admits to be comprehensible but unreasonable.

Four months later, the same journal—which is one of the official organs of the Imperial Government—published a very rose-coloured picture of the state of things in Belgium (March 26, 1915). On the previous day (No. 307 of March 25) it had reproduced a covertly pro-German letter in a Netherlands paper under the sarcastic caption (in inverted commas) *Das "schwer geprüfte Belgien"* (severely tested Belgium). "Everywhere one sees nothing but tilled and sown fields. . . . At Liége the traffic appears to be very little below normal; at Louvain and Malines there seems to be a renewal of activity," and so on.

The optimism of the *Kölnische Zeitung* and other official papers is so very extravagant that the *Vorwärts* (of April 6, 1915) thinks it to be its duty to protest in a long article.

None the less the campaign is prosecuted steadily. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* of April 13, 1915, announces that the economic revival in Belgium is a fact:

> Everywhere, in industrial centres especially, economic activity increases daily. Factories are getting busy again, the blast furnaces have been blown in, and retail business has regained some of its former dimensions, notably at Brussels.

On May 15, 1915, a Swiss paper, *Die Ostschweiz*, republished an article of the same kind by M. Walter Bloem, a German officer attached to the person of the Governor-General, which had appeared in *Die Woche*.

The *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* (No. 275, early edition, of June 1, 1915; No. 276, late edition, of June 2, 1915; No. 277, early edition, of June 2, 1915; and No. 278, late edition, of June 3, 1915) publishes long extracts from an account given by M. J. Humar, a Munich municipal councillor, of a long tour of investigation which he had just made in Belgium (from mid-March to April 10, 1915).

According to M. Humar, at this time, say, eight months after the war broke out (the italics are ours):

It is *fundamentally wrong to think that the Belgian* and French populations in the occupied districts are badly off, that they suffer distress and famine, and that they ought to be sent money. . . . *Speaking generally, it may be said that these populations are now living in just the same way as they did in peace time.* There has been no rise in prices. . . . German money should be accepted at the fixed exchange rate of 1.25 francs per mark. . .

At the present time many collieries and ore-producing mines are working as in times of peace. Factories have orders to execute, some of them army orders (which have been passed on to them) to enable them to find work for their employés. The electric power stations and electric equipment shops are as busy *as in normal times. In the occupied regions of France*—Charleville, for instance—*commercial activity is now greater than formerly.*

The German Administration was less successful in other directions. I may just recall the plan which it had for re-starting the *Cockerill Works at Liége.* Since that town was occupied it has been reported in Germany that these works were run by the Higher German Administration under the management of a commandant, and that the workmen had been promised a fifty per cent. rise in wages, provided they behaved well. However, the matter has not been so simple in this respect. It appears that, in the first place, the attitude of labour had been misjudged. But simply according to the Hague Convention, the workmen could not be compelled to manufacture arms for their country's foes. *Altogether there are about* 4000 *men at work*—about half the usual number.

Nowhere else are arms made for Germany.

To sum up, one may say that the majority of the factories, collieries, etc., are working. Wherever necessary, the management is in the hands of German officials. . .

Moreover, the German Administration has taken many measures against *unemployment and laziness. Thousands of workmen and officials have naturally found work through the revival of the railway and postal services, and of industry and agriculture.* So far as the carrying out of

their duties is concerned, it must be recognised that the town police works satisfactorily in effective collaboration with the German Administration. The maintenance of order and public safety has been entrusted to the German Landsturm. *Knots of ragged creatures at street corners, such as were noticed formerly, are not now to be seen any longer in Belgian towns.*

The large class of workmen which possesses no savings still has to live sparely and carefully, but those who are without well-paid work are assisted by communal bodies and the charitable institutions referred to above.

On June 14, 1915, a pro-German Berne paper, the *Berner Tagblatt*, issued a eulogy of the economic work done by Governor-General von Bissing, and of the happy results obtained by him. This article is among those that have gone the round of the German press.

On July 9, 1915, the *Berliner Tageblatt* (No. 345) describes the journey of a number of German representatives who found Belgium apparently enjoying great prosperity, but for one dark feature in the picture—unemployment. But this was due to the Belgian's laziness or unwillingness to work.

In October, 1915, in an interview given to M. W. Scheuermann, an official war correspondent, and published in the German Press under the heading: "A year of German administration in Belgium and its results: an interview with the Imperial Governor-General, His Excellency Baron von Bissing." (*Die Post*, October 19, 1915; *Neue Badische Landeszeitung*, October 19, 1915; etc.) Governor-General von Bissing, after noting—and crediting himself with—the happy results obtained by the American *Commission for Relief in Belgium* in connection with food supply, expressed himself as follows (the italics are ours):

The revival of industry has developed very satisfactorily. One had to overcome difficulties some of which could not be avoided, nor can be, so long as the war prevents importation and exportation, sets up abnormal conditions of purchase and curtails the importation of many raw materials. Hence it is that some branches of industry have declined during the war, in Belgium *as everywhere else* (In Belgien wie überall). Happily, the economic Commission set on foot by me was able to be of use here, and sought and discovered means of reviving and sustaining industry.

In December, 1915, "neutral" witnesses are trotted out. The German Press spreads broadcast the very optimistic report of a tour made through Belgium by a technical man, the American engineer—J. E. Noeggerath. The Wolff Bureau communicates it to neutral readers. (See *Bodensee Zeitung* of December 18, 1915):

Many classes of workmen are well employed, and if wealthy Belgians had not fled they would have yet more profitable work, as less than 1 per cent. of the factories have been destroyed.

Then, in turn, comes the evidence of an American pastor, J. B. de Ville, who announced in the *Chicago Herald* that Belgium was flourishing in every way. The *Kölnische Zeitung* (No. 1815 of December 29, 1915) gives a self-satisfied summary of his appreciation, thus:

> I found an astonishingly promising state of things in the provinces under German rule. Conditions prevailing in agriculture are almost normal. Important progress has been made in reviving industries. He (the pastor) gives the number of workmen who have returned and finds it relatively considerable. . . . He ends his report with the following conclusion: "I believe that on the whole the poor and indigent in Belgium are fewer, and better cared for, than those in many an American town."

The entire German Press—including even local papers such as the *Niederrheinische Volkszeitung* of December 29, 1915, the *Gelsenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 30, 1915, etc.—reproduces this article, which is also let loose on foreign countries by the Wolff Bureau.

The *Vossische Zeitung* of December 31, 1915 (No. 667), relying on another witness, believes that the situation in Belgium is not so bad as generally represented: "Industry and commerce are returning to the usual beaten paths."

The *Deutsche Export* of February 4, 1916, a technical journal, however, is unable to discover more than a slight improvement in Belgium.

In January-February, 1916, the *Stockholms Dagblad* publishes a series of German-inspired articles to prove that Belgium is not so hard hit as is generally believed; that there is work to be found, but Belgians are lazy folk who prefer to live on relief. The writer pays a warm tribute to the German Adminstration and to the results obtained by it.*

On May 15, 1916, Mr. Sjögreen, a Swedish ex-consul in the Belgian Congo, and a confessed pro-German, publishes in the Stockholm *Aftonbladet* an article giving his impressions about Belgium. In it he also asserts that there is work to be had in Belgium, but that the Belgian workmen are too lazy to take it.†

In July, 1916, three Danish and three Swedish socialist deputies make a "tour of investigation" in Germany and Belgium. The

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* M. G. H. von Koch, a member of the Upper Chamber of the Swedish Rigsdag, has replied to these articles in the *Dagens Nyheter* of February 16, 1916 (see *Cahiers Documentaires* du Havre, Part 46).

† Reply by M. G. H. von Koch in the *Aftonbladet* of May 28, 1916 (*Cahiers Documentaires* du Havre, Part 46).

report thereof appears in the shape of interviews and articles in the Danish and Swedish Press (notably in the *Social Demokraten* of Copenhagen, August 5 and 8, 1916; the *Söderhomns Kuriren*, August 2, 1916; and the Stockholm *Aftonbladet*, August 10, 1916, etc.). Their description of the economic and social conditions of Belgium is something to marvel at. The Wolff Bureau, which dogged their steps throughout the tour with its messages to the neutral Press, emphasised in the latter their delighted impressions;* then the German Press takes up the long notices in the Scandinavian Press, translates them, touches them up, and hands them on to neutral countries, where these extracts cut a dash during the whole of August and September (for example, in the Berne *Weltchronik* of September 23, 1916).

The appreciative remarks of these tourists, guided and fed with information by the German authorities in occupied Belgium, were summed up on August 7, 1916, in a telegram from Copenhagen, which was censored at Berlin, and went the round of the German Press. One reads in it, among other things (we translate from the *Nordd. Allg. Zeitung*, No. 217, of August 7, 1916, preserving the original italics):

> In Belgium we were astonished by the appearance of the *cultivated lands* and by the fact that most of the manufacturing establishments were working full time. This year's harvest in Belgium is on the whole an *extraordinarily good one* and already *earmarked for Belgium's home consumption.* Whereas, immediately after the occupation, there were from 120,000 to 130,000 unemployed in Belgium, at present they number not more than 40,000 to 50,000 . . . The food position in Belgium is represented as *better than at Berlin.* We did not get the impression that the Belgian people are suffering hardships or are underfed. Of course, we ought to bear the war constantly in mind, but as honourable men we are bound to affirm that the Germans have shown real organising genius in alleviating, as far as is possible, the evil consequences of the war.

The *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* of August 10, 1916, third edition, in turn published the almost poetical report of an interview with the Danish deputy, C. F. Madsen, of Copenhagen,

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* A Wolff telegram from Brussels despatched from Berlin on July 24, 1916 (Copenhagen *Politiken*, July 25, 1914, p. 6; Copenhagen *Social Demokraten*, of same date, p. 4; *Kölnische Zeitung* same date, No. 746): "The Scandinavian political Socialists have studied carefully at Brussels the social relief work of the Government. The factories opened to reduce unemployment, the distribution through the Red Cross Society of wool to women working at home, and the crêches, meet with their unanimous approval. Governor-General Baron von Bissing received the Scandinavian gentlemen at the exhibition of social relief works and discussed with them the impressions they had got from their tour. On Sunday they visited Louvain. In the afternoon and evening the Scandinavian visitors had an opportunity of seeing the gay life of the people in Brussels and its neighbourhood."

about his travels. It contains the following, among other things (original italics preserved):

A war like the present one may bring misery with it, it is true, but some unemployment and distress is due to other reasons, and I have convinced myself that everything possible has been done to alleviate suffering. If the present course be persevered in, it will succeed. In any case *the general impression one gets in Belgium* is that if one were not aware of a war being in progress, it would be difficult to detect it in Belgium; for, in proportion to the size of the country, the number of wrecked houses is relatively trifling. Agricultural work goes on as usual; and in my opinion the population fares even better than that in Germany.

Even in December, 1916, after deputations had begun, the same Press tactics were pursued sporadically by fits and starts. We have culled from the *Kölnische Zeitung* No. 1232 of December 4, 1916, and all the other German papers of the same date, a paragraph from the Wolff Bureau entitled: "Maeterlinck at his lies again," and containing the following amazing sentence (the italics are ours):

Maeterlink ignores the fact that . . . *Belgium is the best off during this world-war of all the European nations, socially, economically and hygienically.*

It is useless to quote here the obvious exaggerations contained in various articles dealing with Belgian conditions. It is enough to remark that none of them lets out the fact that Belgium is doomed irrevocably to unemployment and ruin by *war conditions*. On the contrary, all of them represent things as steadily improving.

German optimism, then, be it justified or not, has never regarded the British blockade as so insuperable an obstacle as to make impossible not merely a relative activity but even the economic "re-birth" of Belgium. "This re-birth is a fact; it would be wrong to grumble. If unemployment survives, the onus lies on the Belgians alone, being due mainly to the sulkiness and laziness of pauperised workmen." Such is the conclusion which the German Press has constantly made the most of until the time came when a justification of some sort had to be found for the military decree of deportation of Belgians.

3.—Was Unemployment due to the "Passive Resistance" and Laziness of Belgian Workmen?

A.—The Belgian Workmen's Passive Resistance.

The Belgian workman, taking him in the mass, has never refused work except such as appeared to him to be obviously and directly connected with meeting the needs of the German army in

the field. The Germans agree that this is certainly the reason given everywhere by the Belgians whenever they refused offers of work made by the enemy. But the Germans say that this reason had no good foundation, or at least sprang from a perverted view of patriotic honour.

They are certainly not right in finding fault with the Belgians for their general refusal to work *for the German Army*. The Hague Convention, signed by the German Empire, denies the occupant the right of forcing the population of occupied territory to assist the operations of his armies.

In refusing "war work" offered them by the occupant or by his representative, the *Deutsches Industrie-Büro*, the Belgians avail themselves of an incontrovertible *right*, and at the same time carry out a positive *duty* imposed on them by the moral law—the right of the citizen not to be compelled to bear arms or use his strength against his own country—his duty to do nothing to injure it by helping its enemies in the struggle with it.

In practice, objection may obviously be taken to certain applications of this rule; but the same may be said of most human duties, and this does not prevent the existence of morality and the binding force of its laws. However, the doubt ceases the moment that one has to deal with an industry the products of which are destined specifically or directly for warlike purposes—the manufacture of arms, war material and munitions, the handling of military trains, etc. The German Press apparently recognises this.

It seems to us that there cannot possibly be any doubt as regards manufacture for mixed purposes, the products of which are in normal times meant especially for civil consumption, and in time of war are in much greater demand and must be produced in larger quantities (for example: cement, sacks, iron and copper wire, etc.). It must be admitted that in this case the workman of the occupied country has the right not to lend himself to the speeding-up of production in excess of that required to meet the normal demands of home consumption and of the army of occupation, since any surplus must give direct help to the enemy's military operations.

Speaking generally, one need not look beyond the conduct of the occupant himself for a standard by which to decide whether manufacturers and workmen of an occupied country are justified in exercising their right to cease work voluntarily. Just as the laws of war in principle allow the belligerent to requisition in the country occupied by him only what is needed for feeding and supporting the army of occupation—and this always provided that

he leaves the population something to live on—so the latter finds in the extent and nature of the occupant's requisitions a sure and practical basis for deciding what work is and what work is not of service to the enemy.* It has the right to refuse to do work to meet these requisitions, excepting only what is needed for its own subsistence and that of the army of *occupation*, with which the occupied country is charged. All the same, if the occupant requisitions for his own use products which the population cannot go without, so encroaching upon its needs, the right of the population to stop work becomes in principle undeniable.

Now, it is a fact that in Belgium *nothing* has escaped the enemy's requisitions, nor even his administrative seizures (proofs given later). These have so far encroached upon what is *absolutely needed* by Belgium that the occupant has shirked his duty of assuring the sustenance of an occupied country; and that it became necessary, on the one hand, for a large part of the Belgian population to be supported by outside help, and, on the other, to provide a regular means of feeding the country through a foreign organisation, and all this *without any kind of financial help from Germany.*

Let us not speak, then, of the "wrong-headedness" of the Belgian people in using its right of refusal to work to meet incessantly renewed German requisitions, any more than one would have accused the Danaïdes in the myth of "passive resistance," had they at last ceased filling their bottomless cask.

There is no question here of "passive resistance," but only one of obeying the dictates of patriotism. Possibly some weariness was shown by people who found themselves powerless to satisfy the insatiable!

Moreover, we are not concerned here with debating this or that individual case which clashes with this general observation. We do not attempt to deny or condone the shy and suspicious attitude of the Belgian workman towards every offer of *German* work. But, to arrive at a just appreciation of this state of mind, one must remember how little credit attached in Belgium—and doubtless also in many other countries—since August 2, 1914, to any assurance or profession uttered by German lips.

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* Some of the German edicts forbidding sales or decreeing seizure give as reason the fact that the articles or materials mentioned are required "for war purposes." Example: the edict of October 26, 1914 quoted below. (§ 4, B): "Decree regarding dealing in materials used for war purposes." If the Germans consider themselves right in seizing these materials on these grounds, the Belgians are justified in *giving the same reason* for refusing to manufacture things which will assist the enemy. The occupant discloses, by his very seizures and requisitions, what things patriotism forbids the population to produce or manufacture for him.

Whose fault was this? Confidence cannot be imposed; it must be won. Moreover, it is preserved only by the scrupulous observance of promises made. Can the Belgian people be blamed for remembering the German Chancellor's speech in the Reichstag on August 4, 1914—the historic discourse on the "scrap of paper"? or for remembering the deceptions practised so often by the occupying Power on its good faith, especially in requisitioning labour during the year 1915?

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* (of October 30, 1916), quoted above, claims that the Belgian harvest has hitherto been gathered mainly by the troops of occupation, and even with the help of their teams. Even if this statement were true, it does not appear how the restriction of labour by deporting agricultural labourers to Germany would conduce to improving in Belgium the conditions of which the German paper complains.

But the statement is inaccurate. The Belgians, of themselves, without any help from the troops of occupation have tilled their fields and harvested their crops up to date. The occupant, as will be seen, has taken no interest in the last beyond seizing them.

A memorandum from Belgium, drawn up by responsible people, says in this connection:

> Cultivation in Belgium has so far been pursued exclusively by Belgians with the help of their own teams. In no place and on no occasion have the Germans lent a hand. Anyone can convince himself of this by travelling through the country. On the contrary, not only has the agricultural population continuously followed its usual occupation as diligently as before the war, but the majority of the unemployed have even used their forced leisure to bring abandoned plots of land back into cultivation. In this way, too, all vacant ground near towns and manufacturing centres which is unsuitable for agriculture has been converted into market gardens, and thousands of acres in the country have been cultivated by workmen to increase their family's food-supply.
>
> It may be that some day we shall have to see the sad sight of enemy soldiers tilling Belgian lands. But if this last bitterness be in store for us it will not be due to our indifference or laziness. If our lands remain fallow, it will be because our cultivators have been haled off to Germany and our horses requisitioned for army purposes. The seizure of horses has already brought about so critical a situation in some districts that the German authorities have hinted at regulating their use for agricultural purposes.

It will be noticed that Governor-General von Bissing, in the interview given to the *New York Times* (November 12, 1916), took good care not to mention this accusation brought against Belgian agriculturists by the German Press. He could not have done so

without being self-contradictory, since in the interview with the official correspondent W. Scheurmann (quoted above; see *Die Post*, October 19, 1915) he had been pleased to draw an idyllic picture of the condition of Belgian country districts, and moreover to contrast their attitude with that of the towns:

> In the country, on the contrary—and this should constantly be pointed out—complete calm of a most encouraging (befriedigendsten) kind prevails. *It is a pleasure to see how diligently the people stick to their work*, and how willingly they obey the orders of the German authorities.

And so on. (The italics are ours.) This testimony to the steady application of Belgian agriculturists was certainly nothing but the truth, since M. J. Humar, the municipal representative from Munich, had already noted the same fact (in the account of his Belgian tour during March and April, 1915, quoted above) as one of the outstanding features of the economic condition of Belgium. (The italics again are ours.)

> One knows that, owing to the starvation policy of England, Belgium has suffered serious anxiety with regard to the matter of food supplies. Famine and sickness would have followed as the natural results of that policy, had not measures been taken in good time.
>
> Consequently the German Administration voluntarily lent its support to provisioning Belgium by means of foodstuffs from neutral countries. But it did not stop there. It gave consideration to solving the difficult problem of future food supplies. This could be effected only with the help of native agriculturists. The fertility of Belgian soil happily was of assistance, as too was the *praiseworthy diligence shown by the Belgian peasant*, who was able to value at their proper worth the measures taken by the German Administration. *As in the autumn* [of 1914] *they managed somehow or other to get in the harvest, so in the spring* [of 1915] *they were busy sowing the fields in good time.*

To this evidence we could add a great deal more regarding the state of country districts in 1916 (see especially the account given by the Wolff Bureau to the Scandinavian socialist deputies in July, 1916, as quoted above).

So, then, a continuous succession of German evidence agrees in saying that the harvest of 1914, the sowing and harvest of 1915, and the sowing and harvest of 1916, were carried out normally, and draws attention to the steady application of the Belgian agriculturist. Whence, then, did the German Press derive the right to say all of a sudden, in October-November, 1916, that the German military authorities could no longer put up with having to harvest, with their own teams, Belgian crops for the Belgians?

B.—The "Laziness" of the Belgian Workman.

Is there more to be said on the question of "laziness"? The labouring population of Belgium has a world-wide reputation for its industry. An average working day in Belgium is very long. The Belgian coal miner is considered, and we believe rightly, to be among the European miners who do the hardest day's work. The conditions of industrial and agricultural employment are relatively exacting in Flanders. The wonderful and enduring prosperity of Belgium—an essentially industrial country and the most thickly-populated in the world—could not be explained had one to admit that the Belgian workman has an abnormal love of idleness. Is it common sense to believe that a workman of this kind, faced by a general rise in the cost of living due to the war, and having opportunities for earning high wages, would have refused, together with his fellows, *en masse*, to work; so losing the chance of such high pay and dooming himself to misery for two years past, had not his conscience put unsurmountable obstacles in his way?

The same memorandum, of Belgian origin, from which we have already quoted, says:

> It is fundamentally unjust to draw general conclusions from particular cases and to represent exceptions as being the rule. Nobody denies that in Belgium, as in all other countries, there are certain classes to whom work is more repellant than attractive; but surely no one will think of expecting war to have improved their mental attitude. Being accustomed to live from hand to mouth, they have discovered in the organisations for helping unemployed and needy folk a guarantee of to-morrow's needs being met such as they had not enjoyed before. It is not to be wondered at if they do not wish a state of things which fully meets their requirements to be changed. But just ask the hundreds of thousands of workmen who before the war lived and brought up their families in comfort. Can one believe that a horror of work makes them condemn themselves to privation and imposes on them the humiliation of accepting relief? To make such an assertion honestly would show a wonderful ignorance of Belgian character. So far from demoralising them, their suffering which they undergo willingly, in obedience to a high ideal of patriotism and justice, purifies their minds and improves their character.

It may be remarked that the German authorities did not trouble themselves to pick out the "professional unemployed" and take them off to work. On the contrary, they generally took no notice of these "undesirables," and were especially careful to select for deportation to Germany the most highly skilled craftsmen, not even hesitating to tear them away from regular employment.

So we are faced by two alternatives. Either honest "peace" work was offered unemployed in Belgium, or it was not. If it was, I am quite prepared to admit that we must examine the supposed "laziness" and "passive resistance" of the Belgian working class. If it was not, one need not trouble about the one or the other: the Belgian unemployed are unemployed *compulsorily*, not voluntarily.

Now, if one may believe the interview with General von Bissing, there was so little ordinary work to be found in Belgium that this very fact forced him to organise forced labour for Belgians *in Germany!*

May one draw the obvious logical conclusion and say that General von Bissing slandered Belgian workmen when he accused them of insubordination and slackness? Or should one go further, question his veracity, and say that *work could be found or provided in Belgium*, and that the Belgian people could have been spared restrictions or at least the terrible trials of deportation IF ONLY THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES HAD SERIOUSLY WISHED THIS TO BE THE CASE?

The revelations made by German documents, published below, prove that the second conclusion is as true as the first. The German authorities accuse Belgian workmen of "passive resistance" and "laziness" merely to throw on to them the responsibility —which really is their own—for having closed down ordinary peace work in Belgium and prevented the organisation of relief-works.

4.—The Real Cause of Unemployment:—The Systematic Exhaustion of Belgian Economic Resources by Germany.

In a long interview with the correspondent of the *New York Times*, Governor-General von Bissing makes but one discreet reference to the legislative work done by the occupying Power in Belgium; and even that one, so it seems, in order to have an opportunity of proclaiming his anxiety and genuine efforts to bring about an economic revival in the country.

Formal and official declarations of the Government in connection with this programme and these intentions have not been lacking. The country has been almost as thoroughly deluged with promises of "revival of business" as it has been plastered with large German proclamations.

Both declarations and promises are quite at variance with the true facts. The actions of the German authorities in Belgium have been mainly, if not entirely, shaped by *the studied plan of*

exploiting the country's resources systematically in the interests of the German Empire and to benefit its war organisation directly.

A.—The Rathenau Scheme

We have to-day some exact information about the huge programme of mobilisation and general organising of the Empire's economic strength which was adopted in the first week of hostilities by General von Falkenhayn, the Prussian Minister for War, at the suggestion of a German industrial magnate.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*, Mr. Raymond Swing, has apprised us of the origin and general features of this scheme in an article entitled "A Business Man and War: Dr. Rathenau's Scheme." This article was based on information published in Germany at the end of 1915, which, it seems, the German Government subsequently endeavoured to prevent being circulated.*

Here are some extracts from the complete report which appeared in German in the Swiss paper, the *Basler Nachrichten* (No. 7 of January 5, 1916):

Five days after the declaration of war by England, when the blockade of the German coasts had already become an accomplished fact, a business man called at the War Office, and confided to General von Falkenhayn, Minister for War, a plan for waging an economic war to combat the blockade. The scheme embraced the complete reorganisation of the vast German industries and the creation of the greatest organisation that this world-war has witnessed. The scheme was to give Germany the chance of pursuing the war without let or hindrance, despite the interruption of almost all her imports. General von Falkenhayn examined the scheme, summoned the business man and said to him: "There are four rooms in the War Office for you. You can have all the assistance you may need. Get to work!"

The campaign began immediately, and thanks to it the German victory was half won. This General of economic materials, this German business man, was Dr. Walther Rathenau, President of the *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft.*

Such is the origin of the "Department of Raw Materials in the War Office" (Kriegsrohstoffabteilung im Kriegsministerium) which, with its 36 complementary organisations (Kriegsrohstoffgesellschaften), was given control—until the civil mobilisation

* There are grounds for thinking that the comparative publicity given at that time to the Rathenau scheme was forced on the German Government by the need to defend it and itself against the strong criticisms brought against this new organisation. Later on, when the explanation had effected its purpose, the German censorship curtailed the publicity given to details of the Rathenau scheme.

in November, 1916—of the huge output needed to meet war requirements in Germany.

For a full account of the scheme, which does not concern us here, we refer to Mr. Swing's article and to the other authorities quoted below. We confine ourselves to borrowing from Mr. Swing those passages in which he describes how the maintenance of a supply of raw materials was conceived in this scheme. The following is what he says :

> The question of obtaining raw materials was extremely complicated. Three paths were open. Occupied territories must send their supplies into Germany; some materials could be imported through the few channels which Germany still had open to her; and for the balance they would have to discover in Germany itself sources of production hitherto untapped or use substitutes.
>
> A beginning was at once made in occupied territories with collecting metals, textile goods, chemicals and other materials. Inventories were drawn up, depôts established, a boat service inaugurated and distribution begun. The last by itself required a huge organisation.

The information given by Mr. Swing has been verified directly by M. Walther Rathenau himself in an explanatory interview given at Berlin to the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* 1914 on December 20, 1915, and immediately published in pamphlet form under the title "Deutschlands Rohstoffversorgung : Vortrag gehalten in der 'Deutschen Gesellschaft 1914' am 20 December 1915 : Stenogramm H. Geitner, veroffentlicht mit Genehmigung des preussischen Kriegsministeriums (6-10th thousand : Berlin : Fischer Verlag, 1916). (Supplies of raw materials in Germany : an address given to the "*Deutsche Gesellschaft* 1914" on December 20, 1915. Reported by H. Geitner and published by permission of the Prussian Ministry of War).

We expected to find in this pamphlet a complete explanation of the Rathenau scheme, such as had been given by the American correspondent, Mr. Swing. But a blank space is substituted (p. 32) for the most interesting part. A note at the foot of that page gives the enigmatic explanation that "the organisation and administration of the first chief district for raw material supplies must be reserved for future description."

We are, then, obliged to have recourse to a secondary source of information, and have picked out, on account of the wide publicity given it in Austria, the detailed report of M. W. Rathenau's address drawn up by the ministerial adviser and professor, Dr. Arnold Krasny, for the *Neue Wiener Zeitung* (February 2, 1916), an analysis and extracts whereof were published in the *Zeitschrift*

des Oesterreichischen Ingenieur-und Architektenvereines of April 21, 1916.

Let us quote the following from this report (the italics are ours):

Rathenau describes how, on August 13, 1914, the "Deutsche Kriegsrohstoffabteilung" (German Department of Raw Materials for War) was formed in the heart of the War Office, to solve the unprecedented and extraordinarily difficult problem of avoiding a crisis in regard to war materials needed for conducting the war and for national use.

Rathenau himself and a military colleague were put in command of the German Department of Raw Materials for War. Picked men from all branches of technics, manufacture, commerce and science took their places beside them as advisers and directors of sub-departments (Teilverbände).

In a few months this "Deutsche Kriegsrohstoffabteilung" developed into the greatest commercial enterprise that ever existed in the history of economics. It carried through transactions running into milliards of marks, in its hundred or so groups of stores; and successfully established an organisation quite novel in the economic life of Germany.

A circular letter of enquiry was sent out to about 900 War Office contractors, and in two or three weeks a general idea was got of the demands to be met, the duration of supplies and the chiefs stocks of raw materials in the country.

To bring the general control of raw materials into line with the end pursued, it was necessary to assure a "forced circulation" of all raw materials in the country and to prevent them being squandered on articles of secondary importance and luxury; and to ensure the needs of the army being given preference over all others.

On the one hand an increase in reserves of all kinds of raw materials had to be provided for in all possible ways, both by purchases in neutral countries and *by despoiling stocks found in enemy countries occupied;* on the other, manufacture at home must be at the same time increased by new methods of production, and by fresh developments, and the use of substitutes must be made possible and resorted to on a very large scale.

The occupation of Belgium, of the most important industrial part of France and of some districts of Russian territory offered a new field for the "Deutsche Kriegsrohstoffabteilung." Stocks of raw materials in these three countries had to be applied to the national war organisation, especially the stocks found in the centres of the continental wool market. In the same way, important stocks of rubber and saltpetre had to be turned to account to benefit home manufacture. *The difficulty experienced in respecting the laws of war in regard to requisitions was swept away;* a network of forwarding centres, depôts and distributing agencies was organised; transport difficulties were solved; new blood was infused into national industry to increase it and prolong its vitality.

This official scheme for exploiting systematically the resources of occupied countries was carried out to the letter in Belgium;

which is not merely a manufacturing country but rich in stocks of imported raw materials, and itself a producer. To be convinced of this, one has only to compare with the Rathenau programme the measures taken by the German authorities of occupation as regards economic legislation.

B.—How the Rathenau Scheme was Applied in Belgium. German Orders with Regard to Economic Matters since the Beginning of the Occupation.

The reader is asked to remember that henceforward we shall not consider Germany's general responsibility for the evils of the war which her unjust attack let loose on Belgium. We shall disregard also, provisionally, the war contributions and fines which the army chiefs and governors rained like hail on the Belgian communes; so, too, requisitions of all kinds (they amounted to several milliards, of which *a part only* has been paid, and that in German money). These requisitions* were made by *military* authority, and not a trace of them is to be found in the official documents of the German *civil* administration.

For the present we confine ourselves (sections B and C) to the *legislative acts* of the latter, as communicated to the *Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt*.

In the collection of the German Official Moniteur at Brussels there is a plethora of distresses, taxations, commandeerings, inventories, announcements, authorisations, restrictions, embargoes, etc. Industry, commerce, agriculture, finance, labour—all are passed through a sieve, winnowed, ventilated and passed through again and again, with a diligence and system that are equally remarkable.

(*a*) *Industry and Commerce in regard to Belgium itself.*

An abstract made by us of the chief of these legislative acts from October 26, 1914, to October 20, 1916, is given in the table below:

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* The requisitions levied by the military authorities never ceased. They were continuous, sparing nothing and nobody. They requisitioned not merely what was necessary, in kind and quantity, for supporting the armies of movement and occupation, but quantities far greater than their needs, and a host of things which they did not consume.

FIRST TABLE.

Returns, Requisitions and Seizures of Merchandise. Measures relating to the Industries, Agriculture and Interior Trade of Belgium.

(From the beginning of the German Occupation till October 20, 1916.)

DATE OF THE DECREE.	THE SCOPE OF THE DECREE OR ORDER.
October 26, 1914 ...	The "Commissioner of the Ministry of War" has the right to requisition 44 articles (raw materials) enumerated.
November 15, 1914...	Extends the foregoing (18 more articles).
December 20, 1914...	Extends the foregoing (17 more articles).
November 1, 1914 ...	Orders a return of stocks of wheat, flour, leguminous food and potatoes.
December 11, 1914...	Orders a return of 18 articles which the military authorities will have the right to requisition (benzine, oils, rubber, etc.).
January 25, 1915 ...	Orders a return of 18 articles "for eventual purchase."
February 27, 1915 ...	Orders a return of stocks of sugar. Factories to furnish statistics of raw material and output. Restriction of movements of sugar.
April 26, 1915 ...	The whole coal output to be sent to a "Centre," where its use will be decided.
May 15, 1915 ...	Orders a return of stocks of oats; returns of horses to be made.
May 20, 1915 ...	Restrictions on the sale of potatoes at Louvain, Malines and Turnhout ("Permits" to sell).
June 10, 1915 ...	The foregoing extended to other communes (Province of Antwerp).
June 3, 1915 ...	The whole output of lubricating oils to be sent to a "Centre," where its use will be decided.
August 14, 1915 ...	Extends the foregoing to all oils.
December 9, 1915 ...	(Two notices.) Extends the foregoing to beef and mutton fats.
December 11, 1915...	Extends the foregoing to carbide of calcium.
June 30, 1915 ...	Seizure of wheat meant for bread-making (harvest of 1915).
August 28, 1915 ...	Extends the foregoing to stocks of wheat of former harvests and to stocks of flour.
July 20, 1915 ...	Requisitions barley and winter barley (harvest of 1915) to a barley "Centre."
November 10, 1915...	Supplements the foregoing.

DATE OF THE DECREE.	THE SCOPE OF THE DECREE OR ORDER.
July 23, 1915 ...	The "National Committee for Relief and Food Supply" receives the sole right of buying wheat (seized under the decree of June 30).
February 29, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
May 16, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
July 27, 1915 ...	Seizure of oats (harvest of 1915).
October 31, 1915 ...	Postpones and modifies the foregoing.
August 6, 1915 ...	Seizure of hay (crop of 1915).
August 10, 1915 ...	Seizure of rubber.
November 30, 1915...	Supplements the foregoing.
October 17, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing (to scrap and finished articles).
August 10, 1915 ...	Seed wheat and wheat to feed producers and cattle will not be seized.
September 10, 1915...	Supplements the foregoing (two decrees).
August 13, 1915 ...	Seizure of stocks of chicory roots.
September 16, 1915...	Extends the foregoing to the harvest 1915-16.
October 23, 1915 ...	Extends the foregoing.
October 11, 1915 ...	Seizure of bones, horns, and hoofs (by the "Centre" for oils).
December 5, 1915 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
April 21, 1916 ...	Extends the foregoing to leather clippings.
October 29, 1915 ...	Seizure of animals' carcases unfit for human consumption. (The owner is indemnified with the skin. For use by the *Kadaververwaltungsanstalt* to meet the requirements of the oil "Centre.")
April 8, 1916 ...	Modifies the foregoing.
November 6, 1915 ...	Seizure of onions.
November 20, 1915...	The whole leather production returned to a "Centre" under the orders of the German authorities.
October 10, 1916 ...	Modifies the foregoing.
December 5, 1915 ...	Returns of stocks of potatoes exceeding 50 kilos.
December 19, 1915...	Restrictions on selling cattle and pigs.
February 22, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
May 10, 1916 ...	Repeals the foregoing.
December 31, 1915...	Seizure of articles in sheet steel (and other articles for railways).
January 8, 1916 ...	Seizure of wool.
January 10, 1916 ...	Requisitions flax and scutchings.
May 27, 1916 ...	Modifies the foregoing.

DATE OF THE DECREE.	THE SCOPE OF THE DECREE OR ORDER.
January 11, 1916 ...	Returns of stocks of coffee, tea and cocoa.
January 17, 1916 ...	Requisitions potatoes.
February 29, 1916 ...	Seizure of cement bags.
March 6, 1916 ...	Orders returns of machinery. Forbids sales of such without special leave.
March 13, 1916 ... October 5, 1916 ...	Forbids use of beetroots in distilleries. Supplements the foregoing.
March 15, 1916 ...	Restrictions on soap manufacture.
March 22, 1916 ...	Seizure of trees authorised. (Decisions rest with military governors and the commandants at Maubeuge and Beverloo.)
March 25, 1916 ...	Orders returns of potato plantings.
April 14, 1916 ...	Orders a census of cultivated lands.
April 22, 1916 ...	Seizure of manganese, chrome, wolfram, nickel, etc.
June 14, 1916 ...	Forbids sale of coming cereal harvest (1916).
June 15, 1916 ...	Seizes barley and winter barley (harvest of 1916).
June 16, 1916 ...	Seizes *prepared chicory*.
June 18, 1916 ...	Forbids fruit being used in distilleries.
June 19, 1916 ...	Orders returns of soap stocks.
July 5, 1916 ...	Orders an estimate of cereal yields (harvest of 1916).
July 7, 1916 ...	Orders returns of machine tools. Every sale must be *declared*.
July 8, 1916 ...	Orders returns of copper and tin stocks; forbids their sale except to the "Centre." Owners are made responsible for *keeping* their stocks.
July 8, 1916 ...	Two decrees: the first repeals all decrees relating to the seizure of cereal harvests of 1915 (but retains seizure of earlier stocks). The second decrees the seizure of the 1916 harvest, also of the flour, straw and bran yielded by this harvest. The seizure will be executed by a "Harvest Commission."
July 8, 1916 ...	Gives organisation and statutes of the "Harvest Commission."

DATE OF THE DECREE.	THE SCOPE OF THE DECREE OR ORDER.
July 14, 1916 ...	Seizure of chicory.
July 18, 1916 ...	Restrictions on the industrial uses of beetroot.
July 19, 1916 ...	Forbids the parching of wheat.
July 19, 1916 ...	Forbids use of ginning machines.
July 19, 1916 ...	Orders returns of stocks of woven goods, articles of hosiery, etc. Restrictions on sale of these articles.
July 19, 1916 ...	Seizure of 75 per cent. of the articles whereof returns are ordered by the foregoing decree.
August 22, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
October 14, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
July 21, 1916 ...	Seizure of oats and oat straw (harvest of 1916).
July 26, 1916 ...	Forbids sale or transport of horses during August, 1916.
September 12, 1916...	Extends foregoing to September and October, 1916.
August 16, 1916 ...	Orders returns of production of potatoes in 1916.
August 22, 1916 ...	Seizure of bicycle tyres.
October 14, 1916 ...	Supplements the foregoing.
August 22, 1916 ...	Restrictions on trade in textiles.
September 16, 1916...	Orders returns of sulphurous products.
September 23, 1916...	Restrictions on sales of food and forage.
September 25, 1916...	Orders returns of certain machines, the sale whereof is forbidden except with special permission.
September 27, 1916...	Right of requisitioning driving belts and ropes.
September 30, 1916...	Seizure of high-speed steels.
October 3, 1916 ...	Restrictions on sale of benzol.
October 6, 1916 ...	Restrictions on making of pastry.
October 7, 1916 ...	Restrictions on sale of borax.
October 17, 1916 ...	Orders returns of poplar trunks still standing.
October 20, 1916 ...	Orders returns of internal-combustion motors.
October 20, 1916 ...	Forbids sales of metal-working machinery.

N.B.—In this table distinct *series* of decrees are separated by rules. We have also included orders relating to agriculture, though they should not be noticed till later on.

To avoid giving an incomplete idea of the economic situation produced by the legislative measures of the occupying Power, we have purposely included in the table some measures which might have been dictated by some real necessities of war, which demand, even in the country's interest, exceptionally careful control. (For example, those inspired by a desire for a better distribution of foodstuffs). No complaint is here brought against the German Government in Belgium in connection with reasonable or justifiable measures, always provided that they were not secretly abused to benefit Germany by insufficiently controlled bodies and officials.

But measures of this kind are few enough. Even they help to render industrial and commercial activity more difficult than in times of peace, and the very need for taking them should imply better management in other fields of economic life.

Taken as a whole, and subject to these reservations, the table reveals the promulgation of *sixty-six orders and decrees* in two years: some prescribing the returns preceding seizures, requisitions, seizures and immobilisation with a view to subsequent purchase; others setting up commercial monopolies favouring the German buying and selling "Centres"; others forbidding or regulating internal trade, often in a very vexatious way; still others saddling many branches of Belgian activity with permits (always charged for). Many of these orders were altered (in many cases made more oppressive) by *thirty-three complementary orders*, so that the first table mentions in all *ninety-nine legislative measures* affecting in different ways, and to varying extents, the manufactures, agriculture, and internal trade of Belgium.

Just by way of an example it is a good thing to give the actual text of one of these orders. Here is that quoted first, fathered by Marshal von der Goltz's administration.

Decree Concerning Trade in Materials Required for War Purposes.

I.

The materials mentioned below which meet war requirements are covered by the provisions of this decree:

Silver, copper, brass, lead, zinc, nickel, nickel ore, aluminium, tin, antimony, ferromanganese, manganese ore, ferro-silicon, raw phosphates and superphosphates, nitrates, nitric acid, pyrites, sulphuric acid, graphite, glycerine, tanning materials, explosives, camphor, codeine, morphine, opium, rags, cotton, jute, wool, hemp, threads and goods manufactured from these materials, sacks,

skins, leather, rubber, raw gums, guttapercha, greases, mineral oils, benzine, benzol.

II.

The exportation from Belgium of the materials named in paragraph I. is placed, till further notice, under the control of the Commissary of the Ministry of War in Belgium, 65, Rue de la Loi, Bruxelles. Properly authenticated requests for leave to export should be addressed to the commissioner. Materials belonging to anyone who disregards his control will be confiscated.

III.

The Commissary of the Ministry of War (II.) has power to decide what stocks of the materials mentioned in paragraph I. should be made over entirely to the German Empire or third parties against payment for value received. The value of stocks will be fixed definitely by a commission appointed by the Ministry of War at Berlin.

IV.

This decree comes into force at once

Brussels, October 26, 1914.

The Governor-General of Belgium.
Baron VON DER GOLTZ,
Field-Marshal.

It will be noticed that this decree is issued for the benefit of the "Commissary of the Ministry of War in Belgium." He is the official delegate foreshadowed in Herr W. Rathenau's scheme, which, as we have already shown, provided for the setting up of an economic commission side by side with all military authorities in the occupied territories. We thus get an official proof of the application of the Rathenau scheme to Belgium. The order aims at throwing the cloak of legislative authority around the order for commandeering goods, given from Berlin by the Department of Raw Materials.

The orders which have followed are, *mutatis mutandis*, of a similar kind.

It is not without interest to give a list of the names of the most important industrial articles affected by this economic legislation as a whole.

LIST OF NAMES

of the Principal Products and Materials Covered by the Decrees and Orders given above.

(First List.)

October 26, 1914 ...	Silver, copper, brass, lead, zinc, nickel, nickel ore, aluminium, tin, antimony, ferro-manganese, manganese ore, ferro-silicon, raw phosphates and superphosphates, nitrates, nitric acid, pyrites, sulphuric acid, graphite, glycerine, tanning materials, explosives, camphor, codein, morphine, opium, rags, cotton, jute, flax, hemp and threads and goods made from these materials, sacks, skins, leathers, caoutchouc, raw rubber, gutta percha, greases, mineral oils, benzine and benzol.
November 15, 1914...	Powdered basic slag, nitrate of lime, tar, toluol, sulphate of ammonium, flax, flax waste, cotton seed, linseed oil, linseed, castor oil, castor seeds, palm oil, spirits of turpentine, oleins, stearin, resin, materials for surgical bandages and raw materials and partly manufactured goods appertaining thereto.
December 20, 1914...	Platinum, mercury, special steels, tin plate, hydrochloric acid, ammoniacal liquor, aniline dyes, foreign woods in blocks or logs, peeled cane, ornamental cane, osier twigs, balata, vulcanised fibres, silk, silk waste, silk thread, matches.
November 1, 1914 ...	Wheat, rye, barley, oats, maize, flour, beans, potatoes.
December 11, 1914...	Benzine, benzol, petroleum, spirits of wine, glycerine, oils and greases of all kinds, toluol, carbide of calcium, raw rubber and rubber scrap, as well as motor-car tyres.
January 25, 1915 ...	Lead, pig lead, graphite, copper, sulphate of copper, brass, pinchbeck, aluminium, antimony regulus, raw antimony or antimony oxide, antimony ore and intermediate products, bronze, refined zinc, nickel, mercury, tin, sheet tin.
February 27, 1915 ...	Sugar stocks of various kinds, molasses, syrups, stocks of sugar-beet seed.
April 26, 1915 ...	Oils extracted in Belgium, coke, briquettes, by-products of coke ovens made in Belgium.
May 15, 1915 ...	Oats, horses.
June 3, 1915 ...	Lubricating oils.
August 14, 1915 ...	All mineral, animal and vegetable oils and greases, including petroleum, bitumen, sebaceous acid, olein, glycerine, stearin, paraffin, ceresin, resin.
December 9, 1915 ...	Raw beef and mutton fat.
December 11, 1915...	Stocks of carbide of calcium.

August 10, 1915 ...	New and old pneumatic tyres (outer covers and inner tubes), no distinction between tyres in course of manufacture and those which are or are not mounted on wheels of motor-cars (including tyres of all motor-cycles and small cars with three or four wheels), used rubber of all kinds, rubber scrap from manufacture, raw rubber.
October 17, 1916 ...	Used and old rubber, in any quantity, finished rubber articles of all kinds.
August 13, 1915 ...	Stocks of chicory roots.
September 16, 1915...	Chicory of the 1915-16 crop.
October 11, 1915 ...	Raw or cooked bones, horns and hoofs of slaughtered animals.
April 21, 1916 ...	Leather scrap of all kinds obtained in tanneries.
October 29, 1915 ...	Carcases of animals and parts thereof, skins, offal, etc.
November 20, 1915...	Skins of large cattle, calf skins, sheep skins, goat skins, tanning materials of all kinds, including oak and pine bark.
October 10, 1916 ...	(*a*) Skins with the hair on, hides of colts, ponies and calves; declaration of even one skin is compulsory. (*b*) Skins of sheep, goats, kids, if the stock exceeds 10 pieces in each category. (*c*) Rabbit, hare, dog and cat skins, undressed skins of all kinds of game, if the stock exceeds 25 pieces per category. (*d*) Tanned skins (finished products) of all kinds, if the stock exceeds, say, 100 kilos for each kind of goods sold by weight, or 30 pieces for each kind of goods sold by measure or the piece; also, all skins in course of tanning and currying. (*e*) Barks and woods used for tanning, tannic extracts and tanning liquor.
December 31, 1915...	All rolling-mill products (partly-manufactured products of all kinds, such as ingots, blooms, billets, etc.), all iron and steel plates more than one millimetre thick, also nails and all other material for light and narrow-gauge railways.
January 8, 1916 ...	All wools (raw, washed and combed, blouses, wool waste, wool thrums, artificial wools, mixtures of wool and other materials), mattresses exposed or to be exposed for sale.
January 10, 1916 ...	Flax and scutchings.
January 11, 1916 ...	Stocks of coffee, tea, cocoa.
February 29, 1916 ...	Cement bags.
March 6, 1916 ...	All electric motors, current-producers (dynamos and generators), commutators and motor-generators, transformers, switches, fuses, automatic cut-outs, apparatus for switching in and off, boosters, electricity meters, etc.
March 15, 1916 ...	Soaps.

March 22, 1916 ... Trees.

April 22, 1916 ... Stocks of solid or liquid products falling into one of the classes mentioned below:—

Class 1: manganese, metal and alloys of manganese and iron (ferro-manganese and spiegeleisen).
„ 2: manganese ore and slag.
„ 3: wolfram metal and ferro-wolfram.
„ 4: wolfram steel with a wolfram content of at least 1 per cent.
„ 5: wolfram metal, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 6: chrome metal and ferro-chrome.
„ 7: chrome steel with a chrome content of at least 5 per cent.
„ 8: chrome ore, salts, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 9: molybdenum metal and alloys (ferro-molybdenum).
„ 10: molybdenum ore, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 11: vanadium metal and alloys (ferro-vanadium).
„ 12: vanadium ore, salts, acids, slags, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 13: titanium metal and alloys (ferro-titanium).
„ 14: titanium ore, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 15: cobalt metal and alloys (ferro-cobalt).
„ 16: cobalt ore, salts, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 17: nickel metal and alloys.
„ 18: nickel ore, salts, slag, by-products and intermediate products.
„ 19: ferro-silicon, ferro-phosphorus, silico-spiegel, silico-aluminium-manganese.
„ 20: cast-iron for steel-making and spiegeleisen containing 3 to 20 per cent. of manganese.
„ 21: hematite iron.

In so far as concerns the iron alloys mentioned above the seizure applies also to scrap, shot, and finished or partly-finished tools.

June 16, 1916 ... Prepared chicory.

June 19, 1916 ... Stocks of all kinds of soap and all goods made with greases and sebaceous acids and alkalis.

July 7, 1916 ... Machine-tools divided into 22 classes.

Class 1: all lathes with a swing of 125 millimetres and over.
„ 2: all turret lathes with a swing of 125 millimetres and over.
„ 3: all automatic lathes.
„ 4: all milling machines (universal, vertical, horizontal and simple lever).

June 7, 1916 (*continued*) Class 5: all machines for cutting and planing straight gears, bevel wheels, worm-wheels and helical gears.
,, 6: all planing machines.
,, 7: all drilling machines taking drills up to 5 millimetres (pillar, vertical and radial drills).
,, 8: all mortising machines.
,, 9: all shaping machines.
,, 10: all vertical shaping and boring lathes.
,, 11: all horizontal boring and milling machines.
,, 12: all machines for cutting, milling or mortising grooves.
,, 13: all punching machines, shearing machines, iron-cutting machines, beam cutters, driven by hand, belt or electric motor.
,, 14: all machines for working plates (edging and corrugating machines, etc.).
,, 15: all power hammers (driven by belt, compressed air, steam or springs).
,, 16: all eccentric, screw and friction presses.
,, 17: all hydraulic and pneumatic press installations.
,, 18: all machinery for sawing metal (circular, frame and band saws).
,, 19: all milling, straightening and sharpening machinery.
,, 20: all breaking machinery.
,, 21: all tapping and screw-cutting machinery.
,, 22: all screw-making machinery.

July 8, 1916 ... All stocks, in solid or liquid condition, given in the following classes, which are in the jurisdiction of the Government on August 1, 1916:—

A.—Copper and Tin (*Ores, Raw Metals, Partly Manufactured Products*).

Class 1: copper in ore, by-products, and intermediate products of the metallurgical industry, with a metal content of at least 2 per cent.
,, 2: copper in chemical products (copper sulphate, copper scale).
,, 3: unworked copper, raw copper (refined and unrefined) of all kinds, including electrolytic copper.
,, 4: partly-worked copper, especially forged, rolled, drawn, cast, pressed, stamped, extended, cut, bored, turned, planed, milled (including all parts and accessories which are not mounted in a manner to constitute articles and apparatus ready for use).

July 8, 1916 (*continued*) To this class belong pipes, wire and bare cable. Wires less than .5 millimetre in diameter are not included, nor cords and tissues of these wires, nor plates and foil less than .2 millimetre thick, nor nuts and screws weighing less than 5 grammes each.

Class 5: insulated copper wires and cable at least .5 millimetre diameter, excluding wires insulated with silk or rubber.

„ 6: copper scrap and old copper of all kinds, including parts of old dismantled machines, and old dismantled apparatus, and parts of machines and apparatus.

„ 7: copper in alloys of copper and zinc, specially brass and pinchbeck, not worked up, ingots, plates, or other similar forms and partly manufactured, as described in Class 4.

„ 8: copper in alloys of copper and tin, specially bronze, unworked or partly worked, as indicated in Class 4.

„ 9: copper in alloys of copper and nickel, specially white metal, alpaca, alfénide not worked or partly worked, as indicated in Class 4.

„ 10: copper in alloys of copper and other metals not named above, unworked or partly worked. as indicated in Class 4.

„ 11: copper of Classes 4 to 10 in old machines and scrap of all kinds, including copper of old dismantled machines, old dismantled apparatus and parts of machines and apparatus.

„ 12: tin in ore, by-products, and the intermediate products of metallurgical industries, having a metal content of at least 2 per cent. of the total weight.

„ 13: tin in chemical products (tin dross, salts, etc.).

„ 14: Straits, Banka and Penang tin termed "Lammzin."

„ 15: tin, partly-manufactured, as indicated in Class 4, especially pipes, unfinished capsules, tubes and ware.

„ 16: tin scrap and old tin of all kinds.

„ 17: tin in alloys of tin and other metals not named above (white metal, solder).

„ 18: tin foil.

B.—Copper and Tin in Finished Products used in Industries.

Class 19: bare aerial conductors, including trolley wires of electric railways and tramways, exposed copper rail bonds.

July 8, 1916 (*continued*) Class 20: aerial and underground conductors made of insulated copper wire:—

(*a*) Aerial lines with a section exceeding 25 sq. mm. per conductor;

(*b*) Underground lines (armoured and unarmoured cables) with a section exceeding 50 sq. mm. per conductor.

Class 21: bus bars of electric switchboards, also junction boxes and their fittings.

„ 22: copper fire-boxes.

„ 23: copper pipes *in situ* of at least 10 mm. external diameter.

„ 24: tin-alloy drums for gas meters.

C.—Copper, Bronze, Brass and Tin in all Finished Articles used for purposes connected with Feeding or Housing the Public and for similar purposes.

Class 25: plate, household utensils of all kinds (for kitchens and bakehouses) in copper, bronze or brass.

„ 26: washing coppers, baths, hot-water cisterns for furnaces and ranges, water tanks, including copper, bronze or brass piping.

„ 27: tin mountings and plates for café buffets, etc., tin pipes at least 10 mm. in external diameter, *e.g.* beer pipes.

The declaration will apply equally to articles mentioned under A B C (in copper, bronze, brass and tin) which are covered with a coating of another metal, varnish, paint, etc. It does not apply to goods of iron or any other metal not specified by the present decree which are covered by a deposit (*e.g.* galvanised) or by a film of copper, brass or tin. Nor does it apply to silvered or gilt articles.

N.B.—A decree of November 4, 1916, orders the *seizure* of the articles covered by this decree (*Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt*, No. 276, of November 13, 1916). Another of December 13, 1916, orders the seizure of all copper, tin, etc. goods found in houses.

July 14, 1916 .... Chicory.
July 19, 1916 ... Gins.
July 19, 1916 ... Woven goods, hosiery (knitted goods, etc.) ribbon-trade goods, ribbons, bands, twists, gimps (galloons, piping, soutache), laces, braces, suspenders.
July 26, 1916 ... Horses.
August 22, 1916 ... Bicycle tyres.
August 22, 1916 ... Textiles.
September 16, 1916... Products of sulphur.

September 25, 1916... Various machines.

Class 1 : Portable motors on wheels or fixed.

„ 2 : all road locomotives, and motor-cars, driven by steam or electric power, including steam rollers, steam-plough engines and other tractors of a similar kind.

„ 3 : wood-working machinery :—

(*a*) All saw-benches and frame-saws and saws for cutting wood into blocks or baulks, in which the saw acts in the same way as in saw-benches.

(*b*) All large band-saws for cutting wood into baulks, etc.

(*c*) All ordinary band-saws with wheels more than 600 m.m. in diameter.

(*d*) All kinds of circular saws, such as table saws, squaring saws, swing saws, balanced saws (called mortising saws), mitreing machines, etc.

(*e*) All planers such as smoothing machines, grooving and moulding machines, gauging planes with blades more than 300 mm. wide, etc.

(*f*) Vertical or horizontal milling and mortising machines (called tops) of all kinds.

(*g*) All ordinary horizontal and vertical drilling machines on bases, wall and pillar drills, etc.

(*h*) All horizontal and vertical drilling and mortising machines.

(*i*) All wheel-making machines (lathes and nave mortisers, spoke lathes, machinery for making spoke ends and axles, etc., machines for bending, planing inside and outside, rounding, drilling and mortising tyres and felloes).

(*k*) Various kinds of wood-turning lathes.

(*l*) Various kinds of machines for sharpening circular saws, band-saws, plane blades, wood milling tools, etc.

Class 4 : plant for sucking and forcing water, dust, chips, etc. (pumps, ventilators, compressors), namely :—

(*a*) all hand pumps in idle factories, in stores and in establishments making pumps of this kind.

(*b*) all piston pumps, driven by steam or other power.

(*c*) all centrifugal pumps and gear pumps, driven by steam or other power.

(*d*) all high- and low-pressure compressors.

(*e*) all high- and low-pressure ventilating fans and tube-compressors.

Class 5 : all stocks of loose tubing for water, gas, and air, of cast iron, wrought iron or plates.

„ 6 : all cable and chain windlasses.

„ 7 : all stationary and moving cranes, jib, gantry and bridge cranes, also all cranes revolving on wheels and moved by hand, steam or electricity.

September 25, 1916 (*continued*)	Class 8: all grab cranes on wheels, moved by steam or electricity.
	„ 9: all excavators, dredges and suction dredges worked by hand, steam or electricity.
September 27, 1916...	Driving belts and ropes.
September 30, 1916...	All high-speed steels of all kinds and names; by high-speed steel is meant alloys of steel and tungsten (wolfram), vanadium or iridium, such as the steels of Novo, Capital, New Capital, Tireless, Musket, Bohler-Rapid, Becker-Rapid, Torno, Velocity, Goliath, Clifton, Armstrong and other brands.
October 3, 1916 ...	Benzol.
October 7, 1916 ...	Borax.
October 17, 1916 ...	Trunks of standing poplars.
October 20, 1916 ...	(*a*) All internal combustion engines for motor-cars, motor-cycles, motor-boats, aeroplanes, motor-ploughs, and portable engines, where they have not been declared in accordance with the decree of May 26, 1915, concerning the use of private motor-cars, and where the owner does not hold a voucher showing that declaration has been made.
	(*b*) All stationary internal-combustion engines.
	(*c*) All important parts and fittings for motors named under headings (*a*) and (*b*), in so far as these parts and accessories are mentioned in the official notices about declarations.
October 20, 1916 ...	All metal-working machinery.

(*b*) *Agriculture.*

The above table and list of names include chiefly seizures of such a kind as to have a direct influence on the industrial and commercial position. They include, moreover, some regulations about *agriculture*. It is proper to refer specially to these last.

We have seen that crops and agricultural produce of all kinds are subjected to many requisitions, seizures and taxations *ad valorem*. Some of them may have been made absolutely necessary by the need for preventing monopoly and speculation. But, in the face of the many criticisms which they have aroused in Belgium, one must make some reservations as regards their application.

The number of horses removed from Belgium is enormous, also that of horses used for agriculture, breeding, luxury, and traction. (*)

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* Belgium is especially famous for two breeds of draught horses, the *Brabant* and the *Ardennes*, the breeding of which has been brought to a high degree of perfection. See information about the injury caused to breeding in Belgium given in the *13th Report of the Belgian Committee of Enquiry* (Vol. II. p. 7 foll. Berger-Levrault, publishers, 1915).

At the time of writing (November, 1916) we hear from Belgium that the German authorities are requisitioning all farm horses. In some districts 70 per cent. of them have been taken; in some villages none at all are left. To increase the field of requisitions, the German Administration has just forbidden the use for breeding of mares more than 3½ years old (October, 1916).

Requisitions of draught animals and means of animal traction generally have been carried so far that they brought about a transport crisis and, as a consequence, a coal famine in the towns, just when the winter of 1916 was approaching.

(c) Industry and Commerce in relation to Foreign Countries.

The legislative acts which we have just detailed are most closely connected with the country's economic activity in regard to home trade.

Meanwhile, other legislative measures were taken to fetter, forbid or control the *export, import and transport of merchandise.* The following table is sufficient proof:—

SECOND TABLE.

Measures relating to Exporting, Importing and Transporting Merchandise.

(From the beginning of 1915 to the end of September, 1916.)

DATE OF DECREE.	OBJECT OF DECREE OR REGULATION.
February 16, 1915 ...	Forbids import of sugar-beet seed.
April 3, 1915 ...	Repeals the foregoing.
February 17, 1915 ...	Forbids export of metal-working machines, except at the *order* of the German authorities.
February 25, 1915 ...	All exportation forbidden except with special permit from "the representative of the Ministry for War."
June 1, 1915 ...	Modifies the foregoing. A long list of articles which may be exported only by permission.
July 22, 1915 ...	Supplements the foregoing to seeds.
October 13, 1915 ...	Modifies the foregoing and imposes restrictions on the transport of goods in Belgium.
November 27, 1915...	Repeals the foregoing in regard to *wood.*
April 15, 1916 ...	Modifies the foregoing. *All* exports again subjected to permits.
September 5, 1916 ...	Restrictions on transport of goods in Belgium (modifies the preceding decree).
September 13, 1916...	Modifies the decree of April 15, 1916.
February, 27, 1915...	(See Table I.) Restrictions on transport of sugar.
September 4, 1915 ...	Removes restrictions of foregoing.
November 24, 1915...	Supplements the foregoing.

DATE OF DECREE.	OBJECT OF DECREE OR REGULATION.
March 1, 1915 ...	Removes customs duties (all above 10 per cent.) and excise duties.
April 22, 1915 ...	Forbids importation of soapy acids and oleins.
May 29, 1915 ...	Forbids importations of soaps and saponified oils.
December 11, 1915...	Restrictions on exportation of sugar.
March 1, 1916 ...	List of produce which may not be exported. All others require special permits.
May 2, 1916 ...	The permits to import and export required by the decrees of March 1 and April 15, 1916, are subjected to a tax of 1 per cent. *ad valorem*.
July 26, 1916 ...	(See Table I.) Forbids transport of horses during August, 1916.
September 12, 1916...	(See Table I.) Suspends the foregoing during September and October, 1916.

N.B.—The German authorities levy, when goods leave occupied Belgian territory, in addition to the 1 per cent. *ad valorem* tax of May 2, 1916: (*a*) A tax of 30 florins per ton on metal goods exported into Holland: (*b*) A 10 per cent. *ad valorem* tax on window-glass and other goods consigned to countries overseas. Finally, it demands a deposit of 20 per cent. as guarantee on all exported goods. None of these Draconian measures is mentioned in the German *Moniteur Officiel* of Brussels.

LIST OF NAMES

Of the principal Articles covered by the above-mentioned Regulations.

(Second List.)

Extract from the decree of June 1, 1915, concerning the EXPORTATION *of goods then in Belgium (Ges.-und Verordnungsbl., No. 84)* :—

ART. 1.—The following goods may not be exported except with the permission of the representative of the Ministry of War attached to the General Headquarters in Belgium (65, Rue de la Loi, Brussels). (Permission must be given for each export).

Cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, pigeons;

Victuals and eatables of all kinds, forage, including substitutes for forage;

Machines for working metal, and motors;

Articles of war equipment (motor-cars and spare parts, motor-cycles, bicycles and spare parts, balloons, aeroplanes and spare parts, telegraphic and telephonic material, building and railway

materials, steel liquefied gas-holders, materials for making barricades, harness, saddles, optical instruments, searchlights, horse-shoes);

Arms, munitions;

Raw gum, raw rubber, rubber and gum articles, used rubber goods, gutta-percha, balata and other products of a nature similar to rubber;

Metals (especially iron, old iron, steel, special steels, silver, platinum, aluminium, tin, copper, brass, lead, zinc, antimony, nickel, ferro-manganese, ferro-silicon, mercury, finished and partly finished metal goods, shells and shell scrap);

Ores: (especially ores of iron, hematite, manganese ore, nickel ore, sulphur pyrites, zincblende, calamine, copper pyrites, bauxite, antimony and tin ore), graphite, graphite crucibles, asbestos;

Coal, coke, briquettes and coke-oven by-products;

Colouring matters (especially aniline dyes) and colours with a mineral base;

Cloth for dressings and medical purposes;

Chemical products (especially nitrates, nitric acid, sulphuric acid, sulphur, hydrochloric acid, potassium salts, potash lye, solid potassium carbonate, glycerine, explosives, camphor, sulphate of ammonium, ammoniacal liquid, benzol, toluol, tar);

Matches;

Manures (especially raw phosphates and superphosphates, powdered basic slag, bone powder, guano, nitrate of lime);

Skins, leathers, furs, peltries, tanning materials of all kinds;

Flax, hemp, wool, cotton, kapok, jute, silk, threads, woven goods and waste of silk, rags, bags;

Mineral, animal and vegetable oils and greases (especially benzine, paraffin, stearin, petrol, naphtha and lubricating oil), resins;

Sugar;

Wood (excepting pit props);

Osiers, peeled cane, ornamental cane;

Cellulose and papers (especially photographic papers), printed matter of all kinds, manuscripts and films.

ART. 2.—Exportation of all goods not indicated in Article 1 into Germany, Luxembourg and occupied French territory is permitted in any quantity.

Exportation of all goods not indicated in Article 1 into countries other than those mentioned in the preceding paragraph must be authorised by the representative of the Ministry of War in cases where a railway waggon, a boat or two vehicles or trucks are loaded with one kind of merchandise (not in separate parcels). Exportation in separate parcels of the goods not indicated in Article 1 is allowed, whatever be the place of destination.

ART. 3.—Transportation of all kinds of goods in the interior of Belgium is subject to authorisation by the representative of the Ministry of War only so far as concerns metal-working machinery, confiscated goods, and those subject to certain restrictions by the authorities or those which must be declared.

See the following decrees touching the obligation to declare:

Benzine, benzol, etc.: decree of December 11, 1914 (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés, No.* 23);

Metals and ores: decree of January 25, 1915 (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés, No.* 36);

Sugar and sugar-beet: decree of March 2, 1915 (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés, No.* 46).

Extract from the decree of July 22, 1916, *completing the list of products whereof* EXPORTATION *is forbidden* (*Ges.-und Verordnungsbl., No.* 101):—

Surgical and other instruments;

Bacteriological materials and fittings;

Products used in bacteriological cultures, such as agar-agar, tincture of litmus;

Sterilised vaccines and serums, such as preventive, curative, and diagnostic serums;

Animals used for laboratory experiments.

Also:

Goats, asses, mules, she-mules, dogs;

Skins, leathers, furs, peltries, and tanning materials (finished and partly-finished goods).

Extracts from the decree of October 13, 1915, *repealing the decrees of June* 1, 1915, *and July* 22, 1915 (*Ges.-und Verordnungsbl., No.* 134):—

ART. 1.—The exportation of the goods named below may not take place except by permission:

Cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, pigeons, she-goats, she-asses, mules and she-mules, dogs;

Victuals and eatables, forage and substitutes for forage;

Bones, horns and hoofs, ground and powdered bone;

Starch, soap;

Metal-working machines and motors;

Articles of war equipment (especially motor-cars and spare parts, motor-cycles, bicycles and spare parts, balloons, aeroplanes and spare parts, telephonic and telegraphic materials, materials for building and working railways, steel bottles for liquefied gases, materials for constructing entanglements, harness, saddles, optical instruments, searchlights, horse-shoes);

Arms, munitions ;

Raw gum, raw rubber, rubber and gum goods, old gum, gutta-percha, balata, and other products of the same nature as rubber.

Metals (especially iron, scrap iron, steel, special steels, gold, silver, platinum, aluminium, tin, copper, brass, lead, zinc, antimony, nickel, ferro-manganese, ferro-silicon, mercury, tin-plate, finished and partly finished metal goods, moulds and mould scrap) ;

Ores (especially iron, hematite, manganese and nickel ores, sulphur pyrites, zinc-blende, calamine, copper pyrites, bauxite, antimony ore, tin ore), graphite, graphite crucibles, asbestos ;

Colouring matters (especially aniline dyes) and colours with a mineral base ;

Chemical products (especially nitrate, nitric acid, sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid, salts of potassium, potash lye, solid carbonate of potassium, alcohol, glycerine, explosives, camphor, sulphate of ammonium, ammoniacal liquor, and its distilled products, tar) ;

Cement ;

Bandages and medicaments ;

Surgical instruments and other instruments used in medicine, bacteriological apparatus, material for making bacteriological cultures, such as agar-agar, tincture of litmus ;

Vaccines and serums such as those used for preventing, curing and diagnosing disease ;

Animals used for laboratory experiments ;

Matches ;

Manures (especially raw phosphates, superphosphates, powdered basic slag, guano, nitrate of lime), skins, leathers, furs, all kinds of tanning materials and all finished and partly finished goods made from these materials ;

Flax, hemp, wool, cotton, kapok, jute, silk, also threads, woven stuffs and generally all fabrics produced with the aid of these raw materials, also their waste and all kinds of rags (excepting always old clothes and linen) ;

Animal hair and fabrics woven from them, tissues, felt ;

Mineral, animal and vegetable oils and greases (especially benzine, paraffin, stearin, petrol, naphtha, and lubricating oils), resins ;

Sugar ;

Wood, wood for building, clogs, wooden barrels, osiers, peeled cane, ornamental cane ;

Cellulose and paper (especially photographic papers), printed matter of all kinds, manuscripts and plans, window-glass, photographic plates, phonograph records.

ART. 2.—Exportation into Germany, Luxembourg and occupied French territory of all goods not specified in Article 1 is permitted in any quantity. Exportation to Holland or through Holland of all goods not named in Article 1 require a permit only in cases where railway waggons or boats or two or more vehicles or trucks are loaded solely with the one kind of goods (and even then not if in separate parcels);

Exportation in separate parcels of goods not specified in Article 1 is allowed to any place of destination.

Forwarding goods from Germany into other countries requires the authority of the Ministry of the Interior at Berlin.

. . . . .

ART. 4.—Transport of goods into the interior of Belgium does not as a general rule require permission. *However, permission is needed* in the following cases:

(a) Permission from the General of field artillery attached to Head Quarters in Belgium (10, Rue de la Loi) for moving *metal-working machinery;*

(b) Permission from the General commanding the engineer and pioneer corps attached to Head Quarters in Belgium (10, Rue de la Loi) for moving *wood* and *building timber;*

(c) Permission from the Motor-vehicle Commission attached to Head Quarters in Belgium (10, Rue de la Loi) to move *motor-cars, motor-cycles, their spare parts, raw gum, raw rubber, rubber, rubber tyres, old gum* and *gum scrap,* also alcohol, benzine, pure benzol and naphtha solvent;

(d) Permission from the Central Department for Oils in Belgium (54, Rue des Colonies, Brussels) to move *oils* and *greases;*

(e) Permission from the President of the Board attached to the Governor-General in Belgium, Commerce and Industry Department (30, Avenue de la Renaissance) to move:

Wool, cotton, flax, hemp, jute, silk, finished or partly finished goods made from them, their waste, and rags; also *ammonia in all its forms and compounds, chloride of lime, sulphur and raw materials with a sulphur base, pure sulphuric acid and all its compounds, aniline dyes and tar of all kinds and all their compounds, spelter and worked zinc, alum and plastic sulphurous earth, tar, and products obtained from it by distillation.*

Finally all goods named above from (a) to (e) which have been seized or *must be declared* [See decree regarding compulsory declaration of benzine, benzol, etc., dated December 11, 1914] (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés No.* 23), and that regarding

metals and ores of January 25, 1915 (*Bulletin Officiel, etc., No.* 36).

Author's Note.—A decree dated April 15, 1916, again makes *all* export subject to obtaining permission.

Extract from the decree of March 1, 1916, *forbidding the* IMPORTATION *of products detailed below* (others require special permission) (*Ges.-und Verordnungsbl.*, No. 188) :—

Provisions.

Salt;
Saccharine.

Animal products.

Skins, furs, peltries—uncured, dressed or worked up;
Gloves and Morocco-leather goods;
Ivory in the tusk;
All kinds of birds' feathers.

Mineral materials.

Stones, marbles, alabaster, in the rough and worked;
Cement and plaster, raw and worked.

Vegetable materials.

Wood at least $\frac{4}{5}$-inch thick, for making articles of luxury.

Various materials.

Plaits and other articles for hat manufacture;
Plaits and other articles in straw, cane, esparto, rush, bark, fibre, cocoa-nut fibre, and horsehair.

Perfumes.

All perfumes whether containing alcohol or not, including perfumed soaps.

Chemical products.

Liquefied carbonic acid;
Carbonate of soda;
Sulphate of soda;
Benzol;
Sulphite of soda;
Methylated spirits.

Paper.

Cigarette paper;
Coloured papers.

Precious metals.

Jewelry (in gold, platinum, and silver);
Goldsmith's work (in gold, platinum, and silver).

Machines, vehicles, and tools.

Constructional machinery of all kinds;
Machines and machinery, including accessories, excepting wood and metal-working machines and motors;
Motor-cars;
Motor-cycles;
Watch-cases;
Clockmaker's goods.

Woven goods.

All silk goods, including all fancy trimmings, ribbons, tulles, laces and blond lace;
Hand-made lace;
Linen goods;
Trimmed and untrimmed hats, dresses.

Various.

Matches;
Incandescent electric lamps;
Rubber heels;
Haberdashery and hardware;
Furniture;
Objects of art;
Enamelled utensils and household ware in cast iron, wrought iron and steel;
Explosives.

Putting aside, with regard to this schedule, the similar qualifications and remarks we have made with regard to the first, we have here altogether, for the period from the beginning of 1915 to September 12, 1916, eleven chief orders, altered (and in many cases made more exacting) by twelve complementary orders, or *twenty-three* orders in all affecting Belgian economic activity in its relations with outside countries.

It is worth noticing that one finds here prohibition of the *importation* of products or raw materials needed for human consumption or for Belgian manufactures (for instance, seeds, sebaceous acids, oleins, soap), the existing or potential stocks of which in neutral countries Germany was endeavouring by these measures to reserve for her own use.

An interesting means of estimating the scope of the German economic policy in Belgium is supplied by the general tabular

statement of Belgium's foreign trade, drawn up from data of the Customs Board. This statement embodies about 150 specifications, for the most part more comprehensive, it is true, than the sufficiently detailed lists of the German decrees and regulations which have been examined in earlier pages. The two lists of names (incomplete) of products taken by us from these legislative acts include more than 400 distinct products or classes of products.

(*d*) *Finance.*

The same policy was followed in regard to finance. Since December, 1914, the Belgian provinces jointly and severally have had to pay a *permanent monthly* war tax of *forty million francs per month* "to support the army of occupation and the administration of the country." This in addition to fines (*) and ordinary taxes which have been retained as a whole and even increased in some respects. As the German authorities refuse on principle to accept payment of the levy in marks, it has to be settled mostly in Belgian francs. After transferring almost a milliard of francs to Germany, this levy has just been increased by ten millions per month, and so stands at fifty millions (see regulations of November 20 and December 3, 1916).

Governor-General von Bissing had nevertheless announced in the name "of the higher military authorities" in a proclamation posted on January 9, 1915, that, in consideration of the punctual payment of the forty million francs per month contribution levied from the nine provinces "for the duration of the war, the country, provinces, and districts would be subjected to no further demands, fines excepted."

Another measure which struck the general economic life of the nation a deadly blow was the seizure of German money and notes of the Banque Nationale and of the Société Générale de Belgique on September 12, 1916.

This measure, so said German apologists, was due to the fact that this accumulation of German money was unproductive and exceeded the needs of business done. The truth is that the accumulation had been brought about, one may rightly say purposely, by the Imperial Government itself; and the chief causes of it are to be found in that Government's own measures, namely:

5. Importation of the mark at a compulsory minimum exchange rate of 1 franc 50 centimes per mark. People abroad owing money

* The fines were, and in many cases still are, inflicted on districts for individual misdemeanors, responsibility for which is improperly laid on the districts by the German authorities, on the principle that the inhabitants are solidly opposed to the occupying Power. They amount to more than 200,000,000 francs.

to Belgians soon took advantage of this to settle their debts in occupied territory by means of marks brought abroad at the depreciated rate prevailing in neutral countries;

2. The discharge in marks of such requisitions as were paid for;

3. The refusal of the German Government to accept marks in payment of the war tax, which had to be paid mainly in francs;

4. The absolute prohibition on exporting securities even to pay for the goods needed for the provisioning of the civil population;

5. Raising the moratorium at a time when it was impossible to make industrial investments in the country.

These various measures inevitably resulted in causing a great movement of marks into Belgium and their accumulation in the issuing houses.

When the accumulation amounted to some hundreds of millions of marks, the German authorities set themselves to appropriate them, by confiscation, it need be. They began a campaign of writs, suits and intimidation (an example is the arrest and deportation of M. Cartier, one of the Directors of the Banque Nationale). They pretended that to leave all this money idle, instead of laying it out at interest in Germany, showed intention to injure the German Empire; and so by implication stated that, according to their way of looking at things, not to use Belgian funds to help Germany was to oppose Germany.

The two Belgian issuing houses, the Banque Nationale and the Société Générale, are not State institutions, but private joint-stock companies, which are obliged to keep intact the security for their issues and keep in Belgium itself the financial resources which make up their funds.

The Banks' resistance yielded only to extreme measures—notification that they would be wound up at once if they persisted in refusal. On September 12, 1916, a German military motor-car stopped in front of the Palais de la Banque. Some emissaries of the Reichsbank alighted. The Governor and a director of the Bank were standing at the entrance to the strong-rooms. Once more they protested against the violence done them, and then handed over the keys.

The Germans secured bundles of bank-notes and carried off with them 430 million marks, for which they gave a receipt.

So industry, commerce, agriculture, finance—none of them escaped the attacks, hindrances and high-handed actions of the German authorities, which in every field of the country's economic life acted on the same principle—to go counter to whatever measures were obviously needed to restore Belgium.

Finally, one must take into account that Belgian economics have had to meet the reaction caused by the general dislocation of business owing to the ceaseless stream of decrees of seizure and tying-up of goods and restrictions placed on the movements of people and commodities inside the country. (For example, the general enforcement of passports even outside the military zone; wholesale requisitioning of all means of traction and transport by rail, road and water; removal of the metals from local lines, etc.).

C.—Deliberate Character of the Measures Taken by the German Authorities in Belgium to Bring About Economic Exhaustion.

We now have to deal with a subject open to debate: the argument that the German authorities were anxious to serve the economic interests of the country which the fortune of war had allowed them to occupy and which, consequently, they must administer.

The official heads of the Empire have issued endless proclamations, protestations and assurances on this point.

Must we take them at their word? Or is it possible that they are knowingly and deliberately trying to throw dust in Belgian and neutral eyes?

What we have said already in the earlier parts of this section should, it seems to us, have led the reader to make up his mind on this point. It is evident that Germany's economic policy in Belgium conforms to a ruling idea. What is this idea? It reveals itself first of all in the measures enforced, considered in themselves. It also is revealed, and not less clearly, by comparing those measures with Germany's avowed plans for conducting the war. It suffices to place the list of measures taken by the German authorities—especially requisitions and confiscation practised in connection with industry, commerce, agriculture and finance—side by side with the principles laid down by the Rathenau scheme on the subject of using the resources of occupied countries, to see how perfect is their co-ordination. The proclamations of the German authorities are precisely those which a systematic execution of W. Rathenau's plans demanded.

So, then, in the first place there lies beneath Germany's economic policy in Belgium a military plan of action. This plan is interwoven with considerations of industrial and trade competition. German writers have said, over and over again, that Germany is waging an "economic war" as well as an ordinary war. Belgium was a dangerous rival to Germany in various fields; so Germany takes advantage of her position of occupant to ensure

the suppression or the mastery of this rival. In cases where her policy was not guided by considerations of military interest, it was by considerations of competition, and often the two kinds are associated and support one another.

One fact stands out from the discussion: that, at a time when business is at a dead standstill in Belgium, and the coal industry is about the only one still fairly busy, in Germany, and in Austria, too, the industries which compete with those closed down in Belgium still flourish—the Germans admit it, and statistics prove it.

Neutral observers have noted this fact. A responsible Berne paper, *Der Bund*, the official mouthpiece of the Swiss Federal Government, published the article given below in its issue (No. 540) of November 16, 1916. (The italics are ours):

Distress in Belgium. A Swiss writes to us:

To make good the well-known shortage of labour in Germany, a number of prisoners have been compelled to do military work, such as making munitions, constructing machines for war purposes, making military roads and railways.

They wished to compel Belgian workmen to engage in arsenal work and build locomotives and waggons for military transport. At Malines men were seized for arsenal work and, when most of them refused, the rails of minor lines were taken up and used for military transport behind the Russian front. From that time on the workmen could not get to their work. Travelling by bicycle from one place to another was forbidden, and so the number of unemployed grew from day to day.

The collieries were worked entirely for the benefit of the German Empire, though the mines are private property. Commercial undertakings have been stopped in Belgium; penalties are enforced for the most trifling misdemeanors—penalties which sometimes involve the payment of from 5,000 to 20,000 francs. *The ruin of great Belgian concerns is imminent at a time when competing German and Austrian firms are in a flourishing condition.*

The importation of Swiss goods has been forbidden by the German Government, despite our commercial treaty with Belgium (see *Journal Officiel pour la Belgique*, No. 188, of March 15, 1916). Business letters are sequestrated by the censorship.

Belgian workmen, with whom your correspondent has a close acquaintance, wish to work, but not on jobs aimed at their fellow countrymen at the front. I believe that we Swiss should do just the same thing were we in their places. The great industries of Belgium should provide plenty of work at home. *The deportations to Germany are obviously to benefit German industries.*

This great difference between the economic activity of Belgium, an occupied country, and that of Germany, an occupying and rival Power, should be noted as a set-off against the

professions of administrative care made by the German authorities. At the best these are only suppositions. Positive and irrefragable proofs alone, such as are the German official declarations, can carry positive conviction. They, certainly, are not lacking. But one must distinguish, as regards their honesty, those which were issued to suit Belgian and foreign opinion from those which were framed to suit German opinion. Obviously, the latter, in which Germans explain things to Germans, will best show what the German authorities were aiming at in their handling of the economic interests of the occupied parts of Belgium.

After taking up his duties as successor to Marshal von der Goltz, General Baron von Bissing had to answer certain awkward questions raised by German opinion, which seemed to have taken at their face value the promises of economic revival made to the Belgians in the official proclamations referred to above. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* took him to task in correspondence from Brussels, reproduced by the whole German Press (on December 29, 1914).

Here is a translation from the *Freisinnige Zeitung* of that date :

Belgium under German Administration.

From the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung's* Brussels correspondent : In many German circles the opinion seems to be widely held that the sceptre of government in the occupied territories is in too gentle a hand. Voices are heard crying : " Be hard," and complaining that the enemy's country is treated like our own :—voices criticising the fact that the German Government in Belgium is at pains to restore trade and industry instead of devastating the whole country and dealing its capacity for competing with us a mortal blow. Such criticisms show that the tasks to be faced in Belgium and what has been done there are very imperfectly understood. Even when one has to do with an enemy, and even more so when it is a question of the inhabitants of occupied territory, justice must hold sway ; *a strong hand and respect for justice* must be combined to rule a country in such circumstances. All excessive leniency and sentiment must be, and is, eschewed, but real strength is always just—stern if need be, *but never needlessly harsh.* In taking this principle as his guide, the invader *only serves his own* interests.

Perhaps one ought by brutal or arbitrary behaviour to reduce a people, already quite sufficiently roused, to despair, in the rear of one's own army ! If the German Government in Belgium does its best to put trade and industry on its legs again, and to find wages and food for the working classes, this is not done out of any wish to benefit Belgium, but *to prevent famine and disease, in the rear of our army,* endangering its safety and health. That is why the Government consented to provisions being sent in from neutral countries, to economise home supplies and shield our own

troops from privation. It authorised the despatch of necessary supplies of coal; but that does not cause competition with the German production, as Belgium is not able to produce more than is needed to meet the requirements of a population suffering from the cold and those of an industry now struggling hard to keep alive.

The Government, with intelligent foresight, also took care to establish institutions of social benefit, a thing which the Belgian Government—probably as a result of the increased cost of production—had hitherto omitted to do. When work and output are thus gradually increased in the country, it is *de facto* of advantage both to the country itself and the troops of occupation whose needs must be met by the country's products.

Again, how could Belgium find the means of meeting the financial levies made on her, if she were deprived of her livelihood? It is the conqueror's right and his duty to his own army to exact financial homage from the occupied country, and this is levied in the form of contributions, independently of a further war indemnity. At the present time we are demanding from Belgium the payment of 480 million marks, to be liquidated yearly in instalments.

Ideas about money, like many others, have become somewhat confused during the war, and in the eyes of many people this half-milliard seems a ridiculous sum. As a matter of fact it represents the maximum which the country can pay.

The losses incurred so far by Belgium through the destruction of values are estimated at more than five milliards of francs (£200,000,000). Add to them the contributions, and the grand total must be produced by Belgium, for, in that country, whose riches depend primarily on her industries, there is lacking the class of small-holders who possess as in France, for example, the larger part of the nation's resources in current coin and easily realised securities. The well-to-do have left Belgium and invested their money outside the country. So ready-money is obtainable only in a small proportion.

As a result, if one desires prompt payment of the contribution, one must open again the sources from which money flows, that is to say, one must take care to revivify trade and social intercourse, to restore industry and agriculture—in a word, to encourage wherever possible the earning of money.

The German Government, by paying close attention to these tasks, serves in a duly discriminating manner the interests of both its own country and the territory entrusted to it.

This article in the official journal hardly allows consideration for German competitive interests to show itself, but anxiety on Belgium's behalf is justified by Germany's own private interests. It is a *pro domo* defence, the pith whereof may be reduced to the proverb: "Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs! It would be stupid indeed to exhaust Belgium all at once; better exploit her systematically and get the largest possible yield from her."

To what extent the subject of trade competition was kept in the foreground becomes more apparent in the evidence of a person of standing, Dr. von Behr-Pinnow, who was summoned to Belgium in May, 1915, along with Professor Langstein, as representative of the *Kaiserin Victoria Haus* of Charlottenbourg, "to give their opinion on certain matters of social health." He was thus able, like his colleague, "to appreciate the work done by Governor-General von Bissing in this field." This official eye-witness expresses in the following terms his opinions about the steps taken to counter unemployment (the italics are ours) :

But there were other reasons why the Governor-General acted as he did. In the political interests of Germany herself he was anxious not to exhaust Belgium completely, and not to expose it to famine, which we should have had to fight with German money or—what is even worse—with German provisions; but, on the contrary, so to order things that the country should be able to support itself. That is why permission was given to import provisions from America, and why efforts, crowned with success, were wisely made to decrease unemployment by a gradual revival of manufactures, which are the most important part of the country's activities. Be it well understood that this was not carried far enough to allow German manufactures to be injured.

We see, then, that one of the chief cares of Governor-General von Bissing's policy "of economic revival" in Belgium was to look after the trade interests of German industries: in any case one must not allow Belgian manufactures to revive further than was good for German trade.

This principle, the rightness or wrongness of which in relationship to the "occupant's duty" and the "conqueror's rights" we will not discuss here, was often brought to the notice of the German authorities in Belgium by the German Press. The authorities apparently were themselves far from forgetting it.

For instance, one reads in an article by Dr. Goetze of Berlin, Syndic of the Federation of German Glassmakers, which appeared quite recently in the *Wirtschaftszeitung der Zentralmächte*, No. 40, of November 10, 1916, under the title of "The German glassmaking industry and the War" (the italics are ours) :

The other branches of glass manufacture, the making of plate glass, sheet glass and window glass were already (in Germany) doing very badly before the war. The building trade has stopped almost entirely and as a result the home markets for glass were very limited. At the time when war was declared there was no prospect of matters improving in these industries. Improvement came only when the stoppage of economic life in Belgium, the inevitable result of occupation—a lot shared also by the glass industry—*demolished the strong Belgian competition;* and when neutral

States, which before the war bought Belgian glass, *were obliged to buy German glass. Exports thus became greater and made it possible for German factories to keep going.*

At the present time, in order to keep normally busy, they must export most of their output, since the home demand is insufficient to absorb the whole production. Despite the erection of new buildings and the reconstruction of houses in German territory which has undergone invasion, our building trade does not ever absorb even half the German output.

These are the explanations of the *efforts made by the German window-glass manufacturers to get rid of Belgian competition in Germany and in such neutral States as it could reach by road or water.* The Imperial civil government at Brussels had encouraged as far as it could the reopening of Belgian factories, and so it came about that Belgian glass manufacture has already reached half its peace-time production, and has a larger output than that of Germany in times of peace. It is easy to understand that *seeing Belgian industry appear again as a competitor in neutral markets has caused much anxiety among German manufacturers.* The fatal result was that the German industry was naturally knocked out when the old relations between Belgium and neutral States were re-established. To close neutral markets to Belgian trade has therefore become a vital matter for German industry, and it must be allowed that the Imperial civil government has fully realised the need for solving this problem in a way favourable to German trade, and that it has taken the steps which the situation demanded. Nevertheless, some Belgian factories, helped by German merchants, have managed to export Belgian glass through Holland into territories closed to them and so render prices unfavourable to German sellers. *Measures must be taken to put a stop to this:* and this is why the factories of central and eastern Germany, which are most interested, have agitated for laying an embargo on importation, transport and exportation. Forbidding exports will enable the industry to be placed under proper supervision; while the stoppage of imports and transport will definitely make it impossible to send uncontrollable consignments of Belgian glass into neutral foreign countries. (*)

* M Goetze's statements are confirmed by information to hand. Thanks to the kindly services of the British Government, the managers of Belgian glassworks were able to start nine out of the 27 or 28 furnaces existing in Belgium. Exports to countries overseas proceeded merrily for some months (from December, 1915, till quite lately). The amounts of the invoices were lodged in England until the British Government should give Belgian glass manufacturers permission to ship the goods: it then freed a large part of the money—70 per cent. of the face value of the invoices—which enabled the factories to pay for raw materials, their workmen's wages and the general working expenses. In August, 1916, the German Government announced its intention of forbidding any export which would result in the lodging of any part of the value of the invoices. After discussions with the Belgian glass-factory owners, it formulated its demands (in October, 1916) which were substantially as follows: that loading should be done in a Dutch port: that the whole proceeds of the consignments should be returned to Belgium, and 20 per cent. be deposited at the Foreign Trade Office as a guarantee; and that an export tax of 1 or 5 per cent. should be paid to the Belgian Government, and one of 10 per cent. be paid to the occupying Power. These conditions would evidently make it impossible for Belgian glass-works to keep going.

We must now give special attention to the attitude assumed on this occasion by the Austrian window-glass industry. It is a matter for regret that the latter prefers the existence of Belgian competition, and by so doing deprives the German glass-makers of the chance of introducing their wares in the Balkan States, in Turkey especially. The Austrian glass industry regards the Balkans as its own private market, and therefore wishes to keep German competition out of it. The means by which it endeavours to attain its end—viz., by strengthening the Belgian industry—at a time when it cannot even fully meet the demands of Balkan markets, seems little calculated to encourage the idea of a "Central Europe."

However this may be, in any case we must demand that the Imperial civil government in Belgium shall look ahead and take steps to protect the interests of the German industry in all its leading lines; and that in future it shall not assist similar attempts on the part of the Austrian trade by allowing Belgian glass to be exported.

These authorised statements constitute a very serious confession: that the German Government in Belgium had at first permitted a partial revival of the Belgian glass industry, but soon, at the request of the German trade and with the direct purpose of eliminating competition, it itself ended its own work by decrees intended to make it impossible for the Belgian glass industry to become active again.

The fact has a direct bearing on the genuineness of the German Government's "disinterested concern" for the economic revival of Belgium. When one compares with it the praises sung by the official German Press in honour of the government of the country occupied* one is amazed that such stuff could have been written by any but the most servile pens.

Agriculture was treated in just the same way as manufactures. We want no better proof of this than the statements made by Governor-General von Bissing, at a meeting of German officials held, it appears, behind closed doors at Brussels, on February 27, 1917; of which the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of March 5, 1915 (No. 64, p. 3), gave a report. We borrow the following extracts (italics ours):

* For example, take the following extract from a series of articles by Ulrich Rauscher, published under the heading "Belgium of To-day" in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and afterwards in book form as *Belgium of To-day and To-morrow* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915): "If Belgium is not to-day a desert; if its mines, factories and undertakings show some activity; if its towns are inhabited; if in districts where destruction was widespread the inhabitants have been rescued from a very dangerous situation—they owe it to the German authorities, acting in opposition to their own Government. Without the active support of the first, the American Commission for Relief itself would have been an impossibility." (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 7, 1915. 1st Morning Edition, p. 2.)

Revival of Belgian Industries.

We hear from Brussels:

The deep interest taken by Governor-General Baron von Bissing in Belgian industries found expression at the meeting held, at the Governor-General's suggestion, in the large Session Hall of the Senate at Brussels, on February 27. This meeting was made up of all the experts on economic questions attached to the military governors and presidents of the civil Government in the occupied districts of Belgium.

In opening the meeting the Governor-General described in outline the measures taken by him particularly to heal the wounds inflicted on the country by the war, and to ensure the peasantry a livelihood adequate for restoring agriculture. The climate and fertility of the soil made crops ripen in most parts of Belgium earlier than in Germany, a fact which should be *extremely valuable to our country*. . . .

The Governor-General laid special emphasis on Belgian intensive market gardening. This method of cultivation is looked to to supply valuable produce from spring onwards not only to Belgium *but to Germany as well*. . . .

The question arises whether it is possible, and *in particular desirable, for German agriculture* to turn the Belgian plains into meadowland, in order to make it possible *to save some of the German livestock*. . . .

At the end of the meeting the Governor-General expressed the hope that he would succeed, thanks to the general hard work and energy of the German officials under him in Belgium, and by the utilisation of all the country's capabilities, in making Belgian agriculture give a heavy yield, as this was important to ensure the salvation not only of the Belgian population, but also that of our *German Fatherland*.

We see, then, that Governor-General von Bissing, while protesting his solicitude for Belgium's prosperity, at the same time declared his intention of sacrificing Belgian agriculture to the interests of German stock-raising, by converting into pasturage the fertile and splendidly cultivated plains of the territory occupied. All this, doubtless, under the pretext of the "economic unity of Germany and Belgium" resulting from the occupation of the second by the first. Who is there who does not see in this compulsory and temporary association a want of balance—that the so-called "economic unity" worked almost entirely to the profit of the stronger State?

Apart from the general eagerness to make the occupation serve the interests of German trade competition as fully as possible, the chief and direct motive of the German Government, namely, to promote the systematic exploitation of the country in the interests of the Empire's war organisation, is revealed clearly enough in a host of articles in the German Press. These articles

are worth noticing, because they have been approved by the German censorship, and, for the most part, first appeared in the official organs.

It would be difficult, out-of-place and pedantic as well to attempt to analyse or even enumerate them. But we may be allowed to quote just a few, by way of examples.

Immediately after the invasion of Belgium, the *Kölnische Zeitung*, No. 763 of August 28, 1914, was already printing (our italics):

> Belgium is not passing under German administration; she is being looked after by the German Landsturm, and henceforward must be turned to account in all ways *to satisfy the needs of our army in France* so that our country may be relieved of supporting it.

This was merely repeating, in rather different words, a despatch from Grand Headquarters dated August 27, 1914, which we discovered, bearing signs of its origin, in an article from the *Illustrirte Zeitung* of September 1, 1914. In it we find practically the same phrase, with slightly different wording, heading an article by Dr. Christian Eckert, a teacher at Cologne, called "Belgium as a base for our strategy in the west." Dr. Eckert produces as "a despatch from Grand Headquarters, dated August 27, 1914":

> This country (Belgium) which has just been placed under German rule, must be made to contribute all kinds of things needed by our army, and so relieve our national resources.

He comments upon the despatch as follows (the italics are ours):

> With the fall of Namur, on August 25, and the organising of the civil administration on the same day, not only had our strategic purpose been attained but the conditions preliminary to effecting the economic aims which on their side had to assist the war. A European territory favoured by nature, and thoroughly developed, was bound to us economically at least for the duration of the war, and destined to lend all its resources to the carrying out of our projects.
>
> The subjugation of an enemy country makes it possible—provided that its prosperity be not affected by the fighting—*to use all its resources for transporting, provisioning and equipping the national army.* We shall turn it to account all the more energetically because the cruelties of which the Belgians are guilty and the treacherous attacks of the population compel us to have resort to stern measures of repression.

The writer then dilates on the economic wealth of Belgium. He describes the tremendous growth of the port of Antwerp, the fine means of communication afforded in Belgium by streams,

rivers and canals; and emphasises the importance of the splendid network of Belgian railways. He sets a proper value on the prosperous conditions of agriculture. But he remarks that Belgium is above all things a manufacturing State: her prosperous manufactures are based upon her mineral wealth. Apart from her metallurgical resources she has some other very important industries —the textile, glass and sugar industries.

Among all these fields of industry, excluding her important coal mines, the iron foundries of East and South Belgium are of decisive importance in these times of war. The fortress of Liége, stormed by us in an assault which demonstrated our contempt for death, is as valuable as an economic centre as it is valuable as a strategic base of operations.

"The Liége small-arms industry," continues Dr. Eckert, "has a world-wide fame. The 'Old Mountain' factory holds second place in the world as a producer of zinc." Speaking of the Cockerill works—which he styles the Belgian Krupps—and boasting of its great output of ordnance, he adds:

One of the German Government's first actions has been to get these works going again quickly and to use them as an auxiliary to our German factories *for completing our army's equipment.* By occupying Belgium in force, we have gained a network of communications which will assist greatly all the organisations in rear of our army for evacuating wounded and prisoners, provisioning the army and producing arms and munitions.

The produce of the soil will be used for feeding our troops. *Belgian concerns will be invaluable for clothing and equipping our army corps. Belgian capital must pay for all the treachery of the population.*

In conclusion, Dr. Eckert declares:

Conquered Belgium will henceforth be the conqueror's helper.

Let us observe here that Dr. Eckert published these words under the censor's eye, before the Battle of the Marne; that is to say, at a time when Germany seemed to have won the war and her writers did not show, in their manner of voicing official purposes, the prudence to which they had to revert a few months later. We may also note how these declarations—which were reproduced in almost all the German papers—coincided, as regards date, with the proclamation of Marshal von der Goltz—styled Governor-General—about the "joyful entry" (posted September 2, 1914).

So far as is possible, trade must be revived, the factories begin working again, and the crops be gathered in. . . . I invite you *to give him* (the German Governor-General) *your confidence and lend him your help.* . . . The more heartily you respond to this appeal, *the better you will serve your country.*

Four months later, the *Vossische Zeitung* of January 8, 1915, thus described the German Government's programme for the occupied districts of Belgium. (The italics are our own.)

We must take care that the country's sources of production are of use to the German army and to all industries which can be of service to it.

In February, 1915, another German observer of exceptional weight, as he was a close friend and crony of the German Emperor —Dr. Ludwig Ganghofer—who had been specially commissioned by the official Bavarian paper, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, described in turn, with an impressive wealth of statistics and strong insistence, the deliberate exhaustion of Belgium's resources to help the German army—an exhaustion which, as he himself admits, was the watchword of the German civil government in occupied Belgium. (See *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, issue of February 26, 1915: Article XII. of a series entitled "A Trip along the German Front.")

Day after day for two weeks I have been afoot, but have only got a general and imperfect idea of what is done by the wisely-conducted and smoothly-working machinery of our commissariat in connection with a single army corps. What I have seen here in a limited area is repeated countless times along the whole Western front, to the great advantage of our Fatherland.

One principle guides our operations everywhere: *Fetch as little as possible from Germany to supply the army's needs; get as much as you can out of the enemy country conquered; and send back into Germany whatever the army does not want and can be used at home.*

In three months the conquered country supplied four-fifths of what the army needed. Even now, although the available resources of the occupied districts are contracting, the conquered country still furnishes two-thirds of all that the Western army requires. Under this head Germany saves (at a moderate estimate) *from* $3\frac{1}{2}$ *to* 4 *million marks a day.*

The beneficial effects of the German victory are still further increased to a noteworthy extent by the profits resulting from *the economic war*, which has been waged, in conformity with the demands of international law, *against vanquished countries*; that is, by using public property transferred in enormous quantities from Belgium and Northern France *into Germany* —war booty, fortress supplies and equipment, *cereals, wool, metals, precious woods and other goods*—all private property being respected, and not requisitioned, though, if need be, it may be seized to increase German supplies, its full value of course being paid in such cases. What Germany saves and acquires by this economic war, *waged in a commercial spirit*, may be reckoned at 6 *to* 7 *million marks more per day*; so that the *whole profit* realised by the German Empire *behind the Western front since the beginning of the war may be placed at about two milliards of marks* (£100,000,000). This constitutes a magnificent victory for Germany,

as reckoned by the sparing and increasing of her economic strength; for the enemy, a crushing defeat, nothing more nor less than THE EXHAUSTION OF ALL THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE TERRITORY which we have deprived him of.

I shall have to speak again about the ramifications and handling of this *economic war. We shall then know how to set a proper value on the phrase "unpractical Germans."* A high German officer at St. Quentin described this fortunate change and favourable turn of affairs in the following words, said half in earnest and half in jest: "It is wonderful what a lot man knows. I am really and primarily an officer in the Potsdam Guards. At present I am trading in wood and wool, and making quite a good job of it!"

Here is a detail which proves the genuineness of this avowal, which was obviously intended for home consumption only. When reprinting his twelve articles in the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* in book form as "A Journey to the German Front, 1915" (Ullstein & Co., Berlin), Dr. Ludwig Ganghofer inserts in it (pp. 207-221) Article No. 12 of February 26, 1915,—but, without warning the reader, is careful to excise all the last part of it (three paragraphs, making up 67 lines), which is translated above.

The excision occurs just where there comes the transition "Day after day for two weeks . . ." leading up to the paragraph "One principle guides our operations . . ."; and the change is effected in such a way that the reader cannot doubt that an omission has been made and that he has been deprived of an important part of the original article.

Further, the writer altered the date of the article. Whereas, in the paper, Article 12 was dated *February* 14, 1915, in the volume, Chapter 12, which reproduces it, is dated *February* 21, 1915. Did the author perhaps think that he would in this manner more certainly put casual readers off the scent as to the identity of Article 12 in the paper with Chapter 12 in the book?

Five months after Dr. Ganghofer another German, Ferdinand Hoff, a member of the Reichstag and Prussian Lowe House, describes, in an article in the *Vogtländischer Anzeiger* of July 13, 1915, called "Behind the Front in Belgium," his "general impressions of the country and of its administration"; and on the latter point writes as follows (italics are our own):

> After all, so far as the administration is concerned, it goes without saying that the needs and interests of our incomparable army *and of the German Fatherland* take first place, and that the important economic and other resources, such as equipment (Einrichtungen), of the country, are turned to the account of *both*.

Which means "*to the account of the German Army and of the German Empire.*"

Six months later, the same spirit is at work.

At the session of the Reichstag held on January 15, 1916, some criticisms in regard to details were made of the fine organisation built up at M. W. Rathenau's inspired suggestion. Dealing with the question of military pay, the Socialist deputy Stucklen expressed himself as follows :

Nowadays economic committees (*Wirtschaftsausschüsse*) are attached everywhere to the military authorities (in occupied countries). Why is there no control of the basis on which the gentlemen thus engaged are remunerated ?

In reply to this question General von Wandel, acting for the Prussian Minister of War, replied in the following words, which, as coming from him, are of the nature of an official statement :

As Deputy Stucklen criticises unfavourably the work done by the economic committees, may I be allowed to reply to him that these committees are doing fine work in all directions—in organising agriculture and manufactures—and that, if our men have been well cared for and *large supplies have been removed from the occupied territories into the heart of Germany, we owe it in large part to the wise and unwearying devotion of the economic committees.* They have deserved well of their country.

One could hardly state more categorically that, on the one hand, the requisitions and seizures of all kinds made by the Germans in occupied territory were not meant to meet, and therefore were not proportionate to, the needs of the army of occupation ; and, on the other hand, that their confiscations were officially so arranged as to draw all the resources of conquered territory into Germany and there use them solely for supplying the sinews of the Empire's war.*

The words of the Prussian War Minister definitely confirm our contention that the economic measures of the German Government in Belgium were merely a deliberate and systematic application of the principles laid down by W. Rathenau at the outbreak of the war for the guidance of the German Government in occupied countries. The conclusion is obvious. The economic policy of the German authorities in Belgium was not inspired by anxiety to

* Moreover, we read in the *Neue Freie Presse* of May 10, 1915 (morning edition), this explicit confession in an article dealing with the subject of paying for requisitions : " The stocks of goods in existence at the time of occupying Antwerp and other towns in Belgium and Northern France were seized by the authorities (German military) to meet the needs of the army of occupation, and *complete our war supplies.*"

restore the country's economic life, nor even by considerations of what this country needed in time of war. The German Government was chiefly concerned with exploiting Belgium's resources systematically and solely in the interests of the German Empire, either to meet war requirements, or to eliminate trade competition, or to effect both ends at once.

Thanks to her occupation, she has been able to pursue in Belgium that policy which is a well-known feature of her colonial and military history, under the guise of "a policy of exhaustion" (*Raubwirtschaft*).

D.—The Extent of the Damage Suffered by Belgium as a Result of the Economic Policy of the German Government.

It would be a difficult matter, one sees, to reckon up exactly the economic losses sustained by Belgium as a result of this system being applied to her. We have, however, a few data from German sources which, though incomplete, allow one to form an approximate idea of the extent to which the removal of riches, products and working materials was carried by Germany in Belgium.

(*a*) The *War Contribution*, for example, as a fact. It was instituted in the first instance for a year, and in November, 1915, became a permanent contribution "till further orders" (*bis auf weiteres*). It is paid in monthly instalments.

From December, 1914, to November, 1915, it stood at 40 *million francs per month*. On November 20, 1915, it was increased to 50 *million francs per month*.*

In this way it brought into the German war-chest, between December, 1914, and November, 1916, 960 million francs, and, in December, 1916, 50 millions—a grand total up to the present time of, say, 1010 million francs (£40,400,000).

(*b*) This general contribution, *levied from the nine provinces as a whole*, was replaced by a system of *local war contributions* and *fines*, affecting provinces or towns individually—a system which is still in force to a certain extent.

It has not been possible to draw up an exact and complete statement. We therefore confine ourselves to giving† the largest

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* The Provincial Councils were required to vote the necessary credits *in the form of loans*. They refused, with one exception. The German Government then annulled their resolutions to refuse as "contrary to the general interests," and empowered German authorities in each province to take official steps to enforce loans and payment.

† *Cf.* J. Massart's "How the Belgians Resist German Domination" (Paris: Payot et Cie, 1916) *passim*.

contributions paid, in most cases since a date previous to December, 1914:

Brussels and Brabant*	...	...	40	million	francs.
Antwerp	...	...	50	,,	,,
Courtrai	...	...	10	,,	,,
Tournai	...	...	2	,,	,,
Province de Liége	...	...	50	,,	,,
Liége (city)	...	...	20	,,	,,
Namur	...	...	32	,,	,,
Roulers	...	...	1½	,,	,,

A part of the war levy laid on Brussels and Brabant province might possibly have been merged into the general monthly war levy. On the other hand, one must add to the figures the sundry large fines which Brussels (a fine of 5 million francs may be noted) and other towns had to pay—several millions in all.

(*c*) *General destruction of resources and economic riches.*—We have seen above that, at the end of December, 1914, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the official organ of the Imperial Chancellor, estimated this at more than 5 milliards. (He does not say whether he means francs or marks; if the second, the figures will stand at 6½ milliards of francs.)

(*d*) *Supporting the German armies—both the army of occupation and the armies operating on the Western front.*—In this connection we have the calculations of Dr. L. Ganghofer, quoted above. Perhaps the author means these to apply in part to the invaded districts of northern France.

L. Ganghofer, writing in February 1915, puts their value at 3½ to 4 million marks (say 5 million francs) *per day*, since the beginning of the war, for army needs alone; and from 6 to 7 million marks (more than 8 million francs) *per day* for the materials and goods seized and carried off into Germany. A total, let us say, for six months of occupation of about 2 milliards of marks, or 2½ milliards of francs (£100,000,000).

As yet we have no direct means of checking these calculations. But they do not appear exaggerated in the light of the conclusions reached by a German statistician, M. Ballod. He, in a striking essay, "*Die Nährungsmittelversorgung Deutschlands im ersten und zweiten Kriegsjahre*" (The provisioning of Germany during the first two years of the war), which appeared in a well-known

* The province of Brabant was in the first instance (August 20, 1914) subjected to a war levy of 450 million francs, to be paid by September, 1914, at latest; and the town of Brussels to one of 50 million francs. The provincial levy was, we believe, cancelled, and that of the town reduced to 40 millions.

commercial year book (*Schmoller's Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtshaft im Deutschen Reiche.* Munich and Leipzig; Dunker and Humbolt: 40th year, Vol. I.), gives some fragmentary information about the losses sustained by Belgian agriculture (italics ours):

(Pp. 84-85.) In the first place we must remember that during the first four months of the war, when the civil population ate the full normal quantity of food, we were able to effect huge economies through the fact that a large part—*at least three million—of our soldiers lived on enemy countries, chiefly on the stocks in hand there and on their cattle in particular.* The troops' wheat requirements also were largely met by hostile territory —we know that about 600,000 tons of American wheat were imported to help the needy population of Belgium.

It is also true that part of Eastern Prussia was ravaged, and that the livestock in those districts was decimated. *But the loss in Eastern Prussia has been "covered" several times over by our requisitions of Belgian livestock* and of that in Northern France and Poland. It is difficult to estimate exactly the total value of the saving effected by more than three million of our soldiers *living on stocks in enemy countries;* but we may allow that it comes to at least 400 grammes of meat, 50 grammes of butter and fat, 600 grammes of bread and as much potatoes, per head per day. For three million men that would mean $365 \times \frac{4}{10} \times 3 = 438$ million kilos of meat, 55 million kilos of fat, 657 million kilos of bread (representing a corresponding quantity of wheat) and 657 million kilos of potatoes. This represents 12 to 14 per cent. of our national consumption of meat and, we must confess it, only 6 per cent. of our consumption of wheat and potatoes, so far as human food is concerned. Even if the number given of our soldiers had their requirements only half met, 6 to 7 per cent. of the peace-time meat consumption must have been met by enemy countries.

Yet the economist who makes this calculation knows perfectly well—he mentions it himself a few pages further on (p. 94)—that:

Of the countries occupied, Belgium and Northern France cannot furnish us (Germany) with additional supplies, since the population of these territories imports, in time of peace, more than half its wheat requirements.

M. Ballod's essay is nothing more than a very incomplete summary of the results obtained by the German Government, for he mentions the condition of things in Belgium only incidentally: and, as regards Germany's economic situation, it examines only the partial problem of provisioning with foodstuffs during the single year 1914-1915.

To these data one may well add all the provisions seized subsequently to 1914-1915 and materials and goods taken in 1914, 1915 and 1916.

A restatement of the only figures given in German documents gives:

	Million francs.
(*a*) General war contribution (to end of 1916)	1010
(*b*) Special war levies and fines over	200
(*c*) Destruction of values to end of December, 1914 (*Nord. Allg. Zeitung*) over	5000
(Eventually more than 6½ milliards.)	
(*d*) Provisions to February, 1915, including the North of France, 2500, less half for Belgium only (Ganghofer)	1250

Putting the subsequent impoverishment at a very moderate figure, and reckoning it in, one gets a total of at least over *eight milliards of francs* (£320,000,000).

These, then, are the losses sustained by the occupied parts of Belgium as already acknowledged in German documents. When one collects these German data, takes into account everything that has not been avowed or acknowledged, for want of an opportunity or for political reasons, and considers that all this is the result of deliberate legislation, one is forced to ask how a country thus treated can possibly retain any economic vitality and not be completely stifled by so devoted an administrative "anxiety"?

It is evident that such a system of government must lead straight to the stoppage of industry and unemployment: it is also plain that, but for the help given from outside and the admirable mutual self-help of the Belgians, the industrial crisis would have become serious much sooner and attained proportions even more disastrous than those which the German Government takes advantage of to attack the British blockade and the idleness or unwillingness of the Belgian workmen.

The facts cannot be disputed. The disastrous spread of unemployment is certainly a matter of which the German Administration *had cognizance.*

We are going to see presently that it was—at least after the summer of 1915—its *deliberate* work.

CHAPTER II.

HOW UNEMPLOYMENT WAS FORCED ON BELGIAN WORKMEN.

The labour crisis brought about in Belgium by the German authorities has this peculiar feature—that it was the Belgians, unemployed through no fault of their own, who struggled against unemployment, and the Germans, the authors and denouncers of the crisis, who hampered the Belgians' efforts and prevented their success.

1.—How the Belgians Fought against Distress and Unemployment.

A.—Direct Relief.

The great distress suffered by Belgium in 1914 and the sacrifices which she made in defence at once of her independence and the binding force of treaties—in her case historically interdependent—won for her general sympathy and admiration. Yet we may well believe that Belgium has shown herself even greater in her vigorous struggle against the results of the ill-success of her armies and against all the depressing influences of a long occupation of her territory.

The severest trial that a hard-working population has to undergo in captivity is the nullification of its wish to work by the restrictions of a foreign authority. Nevertheless, during this trial Belgium never ceased to be "the country that will not die."

Until the war is over we shall never know what wonders were worked, by feelings of exalted patriotism and mutual help, among the Belgians of the territory occupied. Rich and poor vied with each other—the first in generosity, the second in self-denial. All charitable institutions were supported, and a number of new ones came into being to meet new needs and distress. Many neutral observers have rendered homage to this splendid outburst of brotherhood among Belgians, worthy in all respects of the charitable impulse which made the voluntary gifts of neutral countries pour into Belgium. They have remarked also the extraordinary ingenuity, method and orderliness shown by Belgian local bodies in organising relief and generally supplying the country with necessaries. The activity of the "Belgian National Committee for Relief and Supply," powerfully backed up by "The Commission

for Relief in Belgium,"* has made its good effects felt even in the invaded districts of northern France.

We may observe, to refute in passing the charge of carelessness and indifference brought against the Belgian Government by the German Press, that that Government assists the work of the American Commission by a regular monthly subsidy of 25 million francs, which has been paid since October, 1914, already has exceeded 600 million francs and has just been considerably increased.

Also, it is quite gratuitous for the German papers to bring forward as an additional justification of the decree of October 3, 1916, the need to check at the earliest possible moment, for Belgium's own sake, the increasing load of debt incurred on account of food-stuffs which have been advanced to her, and payment for which will weigh heavily on her sooner or later. The food sent into Belgium for the American Commission is paid for in advance by means of the regular subsidy just referred to. Belgium contracts no debts with the American Commission. The latter's accounts are published, and in them nothing is debited to the State of Belgium.

While direct help was thus given, the Belgian local authorities had organised for the unemployed, in a manner to be described presently, special technical instruction and relief works.

What was the result of these efforts?

For more than twenty months (till June, 1916, or even later), in its wish doubtless to mislead foreign opinion with regard to Belgian outcries due to the legislation described by us, the German authorities, as we saw in earlier pages, spread through Germany and the neutral Press highly optimistic information about the pretended economic revival in the occupied parts of Belgium. Nothing would be easier than to deduce arguments from this information against the main thesis and to stultify the latter by means of its own pretences. But dialectic quibbles must give place to actual happenings.

As a matter of fact, the lot of the humble folk who lived on relief in occupied Belgium was never an enviable one; but at last, thanks to the ceaseless help of private Belgian generosity, to grants from local bodies, to the generosity of foreigners, to the assistance of the American Commission—itself supported by the regular monthly subsidy of 25 million francs from the Belgian Government—and last, but not least, to the stoical patience of the working

* The *Commission for Relief in Belgium* (C.R.B.) is run by an American staff under the direction of Mr. H. C. Hoover, and under the auspices and control of the United States and Spanish Ministers, and of the Dutch Chargé d'Affaires at Brussels. The head office is in London. Other important offices are working in New York, Rotterdam, and Brussels.

classes, this lot was still endurable. So far as we know, no one has died of starvation in Belgium, and however long the test might have lasted and however severe the privations might have been, people would have "stuck it out" heroically, waiting for the day of deliverance.

By way of conditions the Belgians, who have never wished to ask or receive anything from Germany, looked to her for one thing only—that she would allow them to continue to extricate themselves from their difficulties with American help. The occupying Power was on its side strictly bound by international law to guarantee subsistence for the population of the territory occupied, was relieved of this responsibility by Belgo-American initiative, and contributed nothing to the financial support of direct relief or relief works. Should not the German authorities, then, have made it a point of honour not to use its legislative powers to oppose the personal efforts of the Belgians?

General von Bissing is so well convinced of this that in his interview given to the *New York Times* he takes to himself the credit for having stimulated the Belgian authorities to start public works for the unemployed (*Notstandsarbeiten*) and boasts of having himself done everything possible to diminish unemployment.

The facts are that the Belgian districts and provinces were never remiss in this respect and did not wait for the German Governor-General's admonitions or reproofs to get to work.

B.—Compulsory Technical Instruction and Relief Work for the Unemployed.

From the beginning of 1915 the Belgian local authorities gave close attention to alleviating unemployment by official measures, both economic and social, inspired by an exact knowledge of the patriotic scruples of the Belgian workman and a perfect understanding of the needs imposed by the special character of his occupation.

Their activity in this field was shown in two directions: the establishment of compulsory technical instruction of unemployed, and the organisation of relief work.

The first was distinguished by its simplicity and ingenuity. It aimed at conserving and perfecting the Belgian workman's technical quickness to cope with economic struggles in the future, while taking advantage of his enforced idleness to enable him to get further instruction in the technique of his calling.

This plan originated in Brussels. The great philanthropist and manufacturer, M. Ernest Solvay, the inventor of the modern process of soda manufacture, was associated with its conception

and engaged himself to support it with his riches (a gift of a million francs). It was also helped by the municipal authorities at Brussels and by the National Committee for Relief, both of which voted it grants.

Its working methods, drawn up at Brussels, were as follows :

All unemployed, male and female, from fourteen to forty years of age, had no further claim to unemployment relief, unless they diligently followed the course laid down by them.

The unemployed were divided into various classes according to sex, age and calling. The least skilled were sent to elementary schools; those who had the most technical knowledge to existing technical schools. The remainder, who made up the majority, were distributed among newly-created establishments for technical instruction.

Instruction was given in French and Flemish. The technical courses were conducted by already trained workmen; the other extension courses were given by barristers and doctors. All courses dealing with an industry were given in one locality to allow the professors to get into touch with one another and agree among themselves as to the general direction all the education should take.

It thus came about that, by the beginning of July, 1915, there were sixteen schools for unemployed in existence at Brussels. Each class contained thirty pupils taking the first course and sixty taking the other two. The management consisted of sixteen persons—four aldermen, four district councillors, four clerical representatives, four townsmen. In addition there were an executive committee made up of five members, and a committee of inspection, consisting of two engineers, two ladies, a barrister, and a doctor.

A University scheme of work was to put the coping-stone on these courses at Brussels in the shape of an advanced polytechnic education.

This organisation certainly shows great energy on the part of local bodies who were subjected to all the cares arising from the occupation and deprived of the mutual bonds provided by a national government. At first it aroused the Germans' admiration. A German paper, the *Altonaer Nachrichten*, which kept a very wide-awake correspondent at Brussels, received a letter from him, dated October 30, about the "anticipatory measures to assist out-of-works at Brussels" (issue of November 3, 1915), in which he praised unstintedly the activity shown by the Belgian communes in fighting unemployment :

There is a movement everywhere in the Brussels area. The torpor which gripped life generally during the early days of the German occupation

is now diminishing. In all directions attempts are being made to fit old institutions to meet the present circumstances, and to evolve new institutions for rendering the situation bearable by all strata of the population.

The administrative bodies of the districts which make up the Brussels area are not content to be behindhand in this happy effort. To begin with, they have decreed works of public utility, so far as their means permit, to afford a large number of unemployed a chance of earning something again. But they have given their chief attention to another very important matter. As a result of the closing-down of many industries, unemployed have naturally become very numerous; and the danger arises of idleness not merely exposing large masses of the population to dangerous temptations, but making them pay for lack of employment by the loss of their technical skill. For this reason the district councils in Brussels and adjacent neighbourhoods have opened offices and enrolled a teaching staff to promote *technical and general education* of the masses. These finishing courses are already well attended, and we are assured that the results obtained are wonderfully satisfactory. We may therefore hope that, despite the restrictions imposed by war conditions, certain industries which now are wasting away may soon be restarted.

Another step forward in the instruction of workmen must result from the fact that a *université du travail* has been started at Brussels on the Charleroi model. The necessary preliminary work has already been done. The scheme of teaching has been worked out, and the teaching staff got together. The subjects to be taught will, for the most part, be of a *technical kind*, and it need hardly be said that the industries and callings represented by the Brussels area will be given first consideration. This "university of work" will practically be the counterpart of the German Polytechnic School, and will be associated with the finishing courses for workmen to which reference has already been made. The town of Brussels has managed to raise three million francs for this institution. The carrying out of this scheme should in any case be hailed as a very encouraging sign, since it shows the rebirth of enterprise in Brussels. One may hope that other Belgian communes will follow Brussels' example.

Another useful organisation which covers the whole Brussels area, and not, like the public University, only the town of Brussels proper, is the "Intercommunal Board for Assisting and Regulating Work." The object of the Board of Work is to put down the abuses arising from the very extensive help given to unemployed. As noted above, large strata of the population* are addicted to idleness, and are quite contented not to look for work, and use the food guaranteed them by the great communal charitable organisations. The Board of Work now means to exercise a

* The German correspondent exaggerates the number of those "unemployed" by choice. The measures taken do not suggest that "large strata of the population were addicted" to voluntary idleness, but that it was desired to anticipate the appearance of pauperism, which always may arise from the badly organised giving of direct help. Yet it will be noted that it was the Belgian authorities themselves who first took these precautions in hand.

very careful control to prevent people who can get work if they choose from living at the expense of public generosity.

In this manner, those who are really needy will be given the chance of getting more than they got hitherto. Those who are working only part-time for inadequate wages will in future receive, instead of food, a payment proportioned to their proved needs.

To attain these praiseworthy ends, which had obviously won the approval of the German Administration,* this voluntary Board of Work issued an appeal to employers to fill in a form every fortnight, showing the wages paid to part-time labour.

These forms also indicate possible openings for unemployed. This will give data for calculating relief and controlling the relieved, and later on will be of assistance to unemployed. The good services of these organisations will be especially evident in winter, as, thanks to them, the expected increase in distress during the hard weather will be prevented.

We would remark that the German correspondent who writes these lines waited until the organisation had begun work in order to be in a position to pass judgment on it. Actually—and this shows the far-sighted watchfulnes of the Belgian local authorities—the commencement of compulsory training for unemployed dates from the beginning of the summer of 1915; that is to say, its conception and realisation anticipated by several months the first decrees of Governor-General von Bissing about "out-of-works" (August 14-15, 1915).

The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, a Dutch paper, and the *Vorwärts*, the official organ of the German Socialist Party, mention the work being in progress at Brussels—the first, in its issue of July 13, 1915 (Avondbl. A); the second, in its No. 198 (1 Beilage) of July 20, 1915.

In other ways it at once became evident that it must have the most happy results, for in this very month of July, 1915, the National Committee, supported by Belgian local authorities and by M. Solvay and several other leading men in the industrial and financial world, undertook to extend it to the whole of the occupied territory.

2.—Manœuvres and Decrees of the German Authorities to Paralyse Belgian Efforts.

But hardly had the work been put in hand when it encountered the at first unseen, but presently open, opposition of the German authorities. People were surprised to see all possible steps being taken to prevent the success of the scheme. As yet we have not

* The German correspondent was wrong in his conjectures. We shall see that, on the contrary, the German Administration refused to these *Belgian* efforts the encouragement and support which he considered to be "obviously" due from the occupying Power.

full information about the details of the struggle, but the brutal result is known to us only too well.

On January 26, 1916, at a meeting held at Rotterdam, one of the promoters of the scheme, M. Camille Huysmans, a Socialist deputy and district councillor of Brussels, and secretary to the executive Board of the "Internationale," was able to tell his audience:

> Compulsory technical instruction had been instituted for all unemployed in receipt of relief. We wished to extend it to the entire country. Well! the German Government put their foot on that effort and prevented its success. That fact is not known abroad; but it too must be known!*

The same thing was about to be repeated in connection with the steps taken by the Belgian authorities, in respect of finding people work.

Since the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915, these bodies had wisely sanctioned works of public utility, wherein the unemployed would be able to find occupation and a chance of earning regular wages. Such is the standard remedy for the ills of unemployment in times of general economic depression. The National Committee offered to aid the districts and provinces financially in such a way as to relieve local Belgian funds of a part of the expense.

At first the German authorities let things go forward, and German papers gave the scheme their warm approval. But a few months later it appeared that, in providing work for unemployed, the Belgian districts and provinces had unwittingly crossed an as yet unavowed plan of the German authorities.

The latter, in fact, intended, sometimes by threats and sometimes by large wages, to attract Belgian labour to German "work of war utility," which it was anxious to organise in Belgium, and to so deal with the country that, as an eye-witness, Ulrich Rauscher, said in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of March 7, 1915 (p. 6):

> It should assure to the *army* a peaceful hinterland, untroubled communications, and *a well organised larder; all this Belgium must provide to-day*.

Now, the Belgian workmen, bound by their consciences to refuse their assistance and labour to German "war work," discovered in the district relief works (the *Notstandsarbeiten*, as General von Bissing styles them) a means of profitable and honourable employment. The *Notstandsarbeiten* thus found themselves hindering attempts to enlist workmen made by German manufacturers and officers.

* See report in *Het Volk*, the official organ of the Dutch Socialist party, issue of January 27, 1916.

In a very general sense, every alleviation of the distress of the Belgian working classes was an obstacle to the plans of the German Government, in that it prevented the workman being completely at the latter's mercy.

When once this was recognised, the German authorities regarded the suppression of all direct or indirect relief of unemployed, technical education and public works as being required by German military interests. *Not kennt kein gebot* (necessity knows no law).

But some precautions had to be taken in connection with putting it into effect. Relief was distributed partly through the medium of the National Committee and of the American Commission, both controlled diplomatically; and, by an undertaking given in writing to Mr. Brand Whitlock, United States Minister at Brussels, on July 29, 1915, the German Government had bound itself not to use the relief organisation to bring pressure to bear on relieved workmen with an eye to inducing them to do work for the enemy.*

It was, therefore, necessary to use roundabout and slow methods, and reach the goal by decrees. That was done in three stages, after public opinion had been prepared by the Press, in accordance with the tactics usually followed by the German Government.

At the end of the summer of 1915, after convincing itself of the futility of its attempts to induce the mass of Belgian workmen to do German "war work" by offer of high wages and by violence, the German Government begins to find fault with "the laziness and unwillingness of the Belgian unemployed." These charges are caught up and exaggerated by the German Press, to prepare the way for the two decrees which were forthcoming.

These were signed on August 14 and 15, 1915, and issued in the *Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt* of August 22 (No. 108, pages 889 and 901).

Decree Regarding Measures to Ensure the Carrying Out of Works of Public Interest.

Art. 1.—Anyone who, without sufficient reason, refuses to accept or continue work of public utility suited to his calling and ordered by a German authority, will be liable to the penalty of one year or more of police or disciplinary imprisonment.

Any reason for refusing work will be held valid if justified by International Law.

(*) See page 78 for the Memorandum of the Foreign Office published in the *Daily Telegraph* of July 8, 1916.

ART. 2.—Article 2 of the decree of November 19, 1914 (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés*, No. 17, p. 57), is superseded by the following provision:

"Anyone who by force, threats, or persuasion or other means attempts to prevent other persons accepting or continuing work of public utility, suited to their calling and ordered by a German authority,

or

work for a German authority or for a contractor carrying out a contract for a German authority, is liable to a penalty of five years' or more imprisonment."

ART. 3.—Anyone who wittingly by relief or other means encourages refusal to work (punishable under Article 1) will be liable to a fine of up to 10,000 marks, and further may be sentenced to imprisonment for one year or more.

ART. 4.—If districts, associations, or other combinations encourage refusal to work in the manner provided for in Article 3, the heads thereof shall be held liable as set out in that article.

ART. 5.—If it be proved that particular sums of money are intended for the relief of the persons indicated in Article 1, those sums shall be confiscated for the benefit of the Belgian Red Cross Society.

ART. 6.—Infringements of the present decree will be tried by German military tribunals or authorities.

ART. 7.—Independently of the foregoing provisions, competent authorities are empowered to inflict fines where occasion demands.

ART. 8.—This decree will come into force on the date of publication.

Brussels, August 14, 1915.

C.C.V. 3297.

Governor-General in Belgium,
Freiherr VON BISSING,
General.

DECREE RELATING TO UNEMPLOYED WHO SHUN WORK THROUGH LAZINESS.

ART. 1.—Anyone who purposely or through negligence makes false declarations about his personal position at an enquiry made to ascertain his poverty is liable to the penalty of imprisonment not exceeding six weeks, unless laws in force lay down a heavier penalty; further, he may be mulcted in a fine of up to 1250 francs.

ART. 2.—Anyone who is assisted by public or private relief and, without adequate reason, refuses to undertake or continue work offered to him and within his capacity, and anyone who by refusing such work becomes chargeable on public or private relief, will be liable to a penalty of 14 days' to 6 months' imprisonment.

Any reason for refusing to work will be considered valid if justified by International Law.

The Tribunal may further ordain the application of the measure provided in Article 14 of the Law of November 27, 1891 (*Moniteur Belge*, pp. 3531 foll.).

ART. 3.—Anyone who wittingly encourages, by relief or other means, refusal to work as punishable by Article 2 is liable to a fine of up to 12,500 francs; further, he may be sentenced to a penalty of one year or more of imprisonment.

ART. 4.—If communes, associations, or other combinations encourage refusal to work as provided in Article 3, the heads thereof will be held liable in accordance with that article.

ART 5.—If it be proved that particular sums of money are set aside to help people such as are indicated in Article 2, these sums will be confiscated and given to the Belgian Red Cross Society.

ART. 6.—Infractions of this decree will be tried by the Correctional Courts of the Belgian Magistrates' Courts.

ART. 7.—This decree will come into force on the day of its publication.

Brussels, August 15, 1915.
C.C.V. 3298.

Governor-General in Belgium,
Freiherr VON BISSING,
General.

The comments lavished on these decrees in the German Press drew attention to the fact that they were inspired solely by the desire to fulfil a social duty; the German authorities wished above all things to ensure the economic salvation of the Belgian working classes, which were threatened by the cancer of slothfulness.

But the true intention also was obvious enough—to crush the resistance made by Belgian workmen to offers of German war work and to prevent relief organisations assisting them in case of unemployment.

To this end not merely refusal of work but help given to a person unemployed by choice were made misdemeanors. However, the Belgian tribunals retained the right of trying infractions; as it would not do to risk defining what was meant by an "insufficient reason" which could make refusal to work punishable, and the Germans had the affectation to declare expressly that reasons for refusing based on International Law would hold good.

This might be regarded as a challenge since, in his decree of June 10, 1915, posted at Ghent, General von Westarp had made an absolutely contrary statement.

These decrees did not alter the Belgian workmen's attitude towards German "war work"; the German authorities apparently did not record many voluntary enrolments of Belgians in shops doing work for the German army, nor any great emigration of Belgian labour into Germany.

Several months went by.

In May, 1916, the German authorities decided to reveal their plans. A new decree appeared in the *Gesetz-und Verordnungs-blatt*, No. 208 of May 7, 1916, aimed directly at the creation of "emergency works" for unemployed. Henceforward *no more might be set on foot* without previous permission from the German administrative authorities. The latter reserved to themselves the right of giving or withholding their consent, as they might see fit; no standard was in fact fixed, so nothing could protect the Belgian local authorities against the arbitrariness of the German Administration. The decree is dated May 2, 1916.

DECREE REGARDING WORKS TO ASSIST THE UNEMPLOYED.

ART. 1.—Works which directly or indirectly are intended to provide the unemployed with paid employment must first be declared to the burgomaster of the district in which they are to be carried out. The burgomaster must forward the declaration to the civil commissioner of the canton, who will apply to the President of the provincial civil administration, and the last will give the decision.

It is forbidden to carry out unauthorised relief works. Relief works already in hand when this decree comes into force must be declared by June, 1916, at latest.

ART. 2.—Anyone who carries out unauthorised relief works or abets the carrying out of such works will be punished either by being imprisoned for three years or more and by a fine of up to 20,000 marks, or by one of these penalties alternatively. The burgomaster who neglects to make the necessary declaration to the civil commissioner, or who allows unauthorised relief works to be carried out, is liable to the same penalties.

ART. 3.—Exceptions to the provisions of Article 1 will be granted by the Governor-General.

ART. 4.—Transgressions of this decree will be tried by the German tribunals or military authorities.

ART. 5.—This decree come into force on publication.

Brussels, May 2, 1916.
C.C. IVa. 3248.

Governor-General in Belgium,
Freiherr VON BISSING,
General.

Two weeks later, the last disguise was dropped. A third decree appeared (on May 15, 1916) which repealed that of August 15, 1915 and—this time frankly—laid down the principle of compulsion to work in case of so-called "unjustifiable" refusal. Also, the decree substituted for the jurisdiction of the Belgian tribunals that of the German tribunals and military authorities, where a refusal might be made of an offer of work from either the

German authorities or forces or from bodies or associations instituted by the Governor-General (*Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt*, No. 213, of May 20, 1916):

DECREE REGARDING UNEMPLOYED PERSONS WHO THROUGH LAZINESS REFUSE TO WORK.

I repeal the decree of August 15, 1915, issued under the same title (*Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtés*, No. 108, p. 889) and decree as follows:

ART. 1.—Anyone who, purposely or through negligence, makes false declarations concerning his personal position at an enquiry made to ascertain his poverty is liable to a term of imprisonment of six weeks or more, unless laws in force lay down a heavier penalty; further, he may be mulcted in a fine of up to 1,000 marks.

ART. 2.—Anyone who is assisted by public or private relief and without sufficient reason refuses to undertake or continue work offered to him and within his capacity, or anyone who refusing such work becomes chargeable on public or private relief will be liable to a penalty of from 14 days' to one year's imprisonment.

Any reason for refusing work will be considered valid if justified by International Law.

Instead of having recourse to penal prosecutions, governors, military commanders entrusted with analogous functions, and divisional chiefs of police can order obstinate unemployed to be taken forcibly to the places where they have to work.

ART. 3.—Anyone who purposely encourages, by relief or other means, refusal to work as punishable by Article 2, is liable to a fine of up to 10,000 marks; further, he may be sentenced to two years' or more imprisonment.

ART. 4.—If communes, associations or other combinations encourage refusal to work, in the manner referred to in Article 3, the heads thereof will be held liable in accordance with that Article.

ART. 5.—If it be proved that particular sums of money are set aside to help people such as are indicated in Article 3, these sums will be confiscated and given to the Belgian Red Cross Society.

ART. 6.—The military tribunals and commanders are empowered to decide what are either infractions of Articles 2, 3, and 4 of this decree, or infractions of Article 1 detrimental to the German authorities and forces or to the bodies or associations instituted by me.

The criminal courts of the Belgian tribunals of First Instance are empowered to try infractions of Article 1 of this decree which, taking the previous provision into account, do not come under the jurisdiction of the military courts and commanders.

Brussels, May 15, 1916.
G. G. III. 4840.

Governor-General in Belgium,
Freiherr VON BISSING,
General.

The words of this decree, it is true, still recognised as valid any refusals of work justified by International Law. But what protection could there be for Belgian accused who appeared before German *tribunals and military commanders* when on the other hand the German military authorities had shown, by its many acts and even by its proclamations, that it did not intend to recognise as legitimate any refusal to work in the direct interests of the German army?

Remonstrances on this point were soon made to the German Government by the British Government in a Memorandum of the Foreign Office published in the London papers on July 8, 1916. The following is a translation of the text from the *Daily Telegraph* of that date:

Memorandum of the Foreign Office.

The attention of the Foreign Office has just been drawn to a decree said to have been issued by the Governor-General in Belgium on May 15 last, which adds to and makes more stringent the laws against workmen who refuse work, against which his Majesty's Government have already been obliged to protest.

On September 22 last a protest was addressed to the patrons of the Relief Commission, against the decrees of August 14 and 15, regarding labour in Belgium. It may be opportune to quote here part of the letter which Sir E. Grey then wrote to the patrons:

You will recollect that Lord Crewe's letter of June 7, laying down the conditions governing the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium contained the following remark:

If the German authorities desire to use the machinery of the Commission and the Comité National for the purpose of coercing the working population of Belgium to employ themselves against their own will and conscience, directly or indirectly, in the service, or for the benefit of the occupying army, they must themselves provide the relief which these bodies dispense, and all arrangements between his Majesty's Government and the Commission must cease.

In my subsequent letter of July 17, I stipulated that "there shall be no interference of any kind whatever by the German authorities, either in the sale of these foodstuffs or in their free distribution in the way of relief to those whom the Commission and the Comité National shall consider deserving of such relief."

In reply to this Baron von der Lancken stated in his letter to Mr. Whitlock of July 29 that the Governor-General would never serve on the Comité National for the purposes of forcing the Belgian population to work in the service of the German army, contrary to the stipulations of The Hague Convention.

On August 14 and 15 the Governor-General of Belgium issued two decrees, which were published in the *Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt* at

Brussels on August 22. These decrees impose severe punishments on workmen who refuse to give their labour to "works of public interest," or who, being in receipt of either public or private relief, refuse to accept work offered to them. Similar penalties are imposed on persons, "communes, associations, or other groups" who "by the distribution of relief or by other means, favour" such refusal to work. The decree of August 14 is to be enforced by the military tribunals. The decree of August 15 imposes automatically imprisonment for a fortnight to six months on all who, having refused work, become a charge on either public or private relief.

Both these decrees contain a clause exempting from their operation those cases where refusal to work is based on considerations admitted by International Law, and I am well aware that the German authorities will claim that this exemption is a sufficient fulfilment of their promise quoted above. They will also doubtless claim that the word "favour" implies a deliberate use of relief for certain objects, and does not apply to the assistance given by the relief committees of the Comité National. Unfortunately, the German authorities cannot expect, in view of their known actions in such matters, that any reliance should be placed on the interpretation to be given to such vague phrases by their military tribunals. The report recently published by the Belgian Commission of Inquiry (19th Report, August 6) on the methods of coercion applied by the German authorities to the railway workmen at Luttre has revealed the German policy in such matters, and it is alleged on good evidence that, in order to give effect to that policy, the relief committees, communal soup-kitchens, etc., have in many cases been forbidden to give relief to classes of workmen whose labour the German authorities desire to enlist in their service. It is, however, unnecessary to rely on such allegations, since, by the decree of August 15 itself, the mere grant of relief to a workman renders that workman liable to imprisonment on the ground that he has in the past refused employment.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate the account given in the report above mentioned, or to dwell on the measures of deliberate starvation, imprisonment, deportation, and torture to which these workmen have been subjected. This, it must be assumed, is the "law of nations" which is referred to in these German decrees, and to which the relief committees are to be subjected, and this is the interpretation to be placed on the "Hague Conventions" and on the phrase, "The service of the German army," in Baron von der Lancken's letter. If any Belgian workman, knowing the extent of the needs of the German army and the manner in which every industry in Germany is already devoted to the task of supplying it, should refuse to work in industries indirectly essential to the maintenance of that army, relief is to be denied him, and starvation and imprisonment await him.

Since this letter of September 22 reports have been received of further attempts by the Germans to requisition labour for their military needs. Now all these stories are confirmed by the avowed

policy of General von Bissing embodied in the new decree of May 15. This decree supersedes the decree of August 15. It enacts heavier penalties than the first decree. Workmen refusing to work are liable to imprisonment from a fortnight to a year; all persons, communes, associations, or other groups giving relief to those who refuse to work are liable to a fine of not more than 10,000 marks, and imprisonment for not more than two years. The whole administration of the decree, with the exception of a minor provision relating to false declarations of indigence, is placed in the hands of the German military tribunals. But, above all, attention must be drawn to the following provision in this new decree:

> Instead of having recourse to penal prosecutions, the governors, the military commandants having the same functions and the heads of districts, can order that the recalcitrant workmen shall be led by force to the places where they are to work.

Comment seems unnecessary on this provision, but if comment is necessary the only one that can be made is to quote the following passages from the Nineteenth Report of the Belgian Commission of Inquiry referred to in Sir E. Grey's letter of Sept. 22, already quoted.

(Here come sundry extracts from the Nineteenth Report of the Belgian Committee of Enquiry. The Memorandum then proceeds:)

This is but a slight indication of the fate which awaits workmen who are "led by force to the place where they are to work." It is presumably useless to urge upon the German authorities the inhumanity of their action, and his Majesty's Government are therefore reduced to basing their protest solely on the fact that the decree of May 15 is yet another direct and deliberate infraction of the undertakings of the German Government to the Commission for Relief in Belgium. They have promised solemnly to abstain from all interference in the work of relief, and to leave those dispensing it free and untrammelled; yet, openly by the decrees which they have issued and by the oppressive measures adopted in pursuance of those decrees in all parts of Belgium, they not only leave the population of Belgium to be fed and saved from starvation solely by the efforts of the Allies and the charity of the United States, but also seek to secure that the Belgians shall be enabled, by the maintenance thus afforded them, to work for their enemies and thus postpone by their own labour the restoration of their freedom and the independence of their country.

A Wolff Bureau article replied to this Memorandum in the following terms (we reprint the French version as it appeared in *La Belgique*, the official German organ at Brussels, of July 15, 1916):

Brussels, July 10.

The London Foreign Office publishes through the medium of Reuter's Agency extracts from a Memorandum in which it is maintained that certain decrees of Governor-General Baron von Bissing compel Belgian workmen to work for the German Army, in violation of the terms of the Hague Convention. This Memorandum was not published *in extenso*, but only some isolated excerpts from it; so that it is impossible to treat it in detail and one is confined to a brief exposition of the question at issue.

On August 14 and 15, 1915, the Governor-General of Belgium issued two decrees dealing with refusal to work. The first aimed at ensuring the execution of works required by the public interests. The second, which concerned itself with folk for whom work has no attraction, was intended to compel able-bodied workmen to accept work and so not be dependent on public or private relief.

This being so, what the decree imposed was not merely compulsion to work, but compulsion to do work suited to the technical knowledge of the person concerned, or to his productive capacity—a compulsion enforced only in the absence of a sufficient reason for refusing to work. It was expressly stated that any reason grounded on International Law would be held valid.

The two decrees in question both threaten with penalties any one who knowingly encourages an unjustifiable refusal to work. By the provisions of these decrees, not only a refusal justified by the principles of International Law, but even the relieving of workmen who base their refusal to work on International Law is not punishable.

The decree aimed at work-shy people underwent modification on May 15, 1916. It was put under the jurisdiction of the military tribunals whereas previously it had been administered by Belgian tribunals; and further, the committal of the offender to a prison with hard labour—regarded in all countries as a very severe punishment—was replaced by the forcible removal of the person concerned to a workshop where only a reasonable amount of work would be demanded from him.

It will thus be seen that this is only a question of decrees issued to serve public ends, to prevent the abuses, which the Belgians themselves have often regretted in unmistakable terms, committed by healthy and able-bodied workmen in applying for public relief. They are measures dictated by absolutely sound legislative considerations, justified by circumstances, which the English Memorandum denounces as a glaring violation of International Law. It is indeed obliged to recognise that the wording of the decrees expressly stipulates that a refusal to work, if justified by a reason based on International Law, is not punishable. But it gets over this objection by pretending that the German military courts do not observe loyally the saving clauses of the decrees and that they abuse the law.

This accusation brought against the German military courts must be rebutted most vigorously, and in fact stultifies itself. It is based actually on the 19th Report of the Belgian Commission of Inquiry, from which it borrows a number of pretended facts. Now, this 19th Report of the Belgian Commission—which, by the by, because of its previous reputation is well enough known to be worthy of small credence, by neutral countries as well as by Germany—was published on August 16, 1915, that is, at a period when the decrees referred to had not yet been made. No less void of foundation than the complaint in the English Memorandum of a violation of International Law is the statement that the agreement arrived at in letters exchanged between Baron von de Lancken and the Minister of a neutral Power at Brussels regarding complete freedom of action for the Belgian Commission of Relief has not been respected by the Germans.

The value and genuineness of this German reasoning will be obvious when the latter is compared with the whole of the facts referred to in this volume, which prove that while, on the one hand, the German authorities made refusal to work an offence punishable by forced labour, on the other, they at the same time deprived Belgian workmen of all chances of doing Belgian work.

Need we waste time over the argument derived from the lack of authority of the Belgian Committee for Relief's 19th Report with regard to the decrees of August 14 and 15, 1915?

What has the Wolff Agency note to say on this point? That the German military authorities had, *after* that date, mended its ways as regards applying International Law in cases of refusal to work? That is what an ordinary straightforward reader would make of it.

Now, here is the actual text of a decree which was posted in *October*, 1915, in all military zones and published in the official German Press in Belgium. The wording given below is a translation from the Flemish version published in one of the official papers, now extinct—the Ghent *Vlaamsche Post* (No. 241 of Tuesday, October 19, 1915, p. 1, cols. 1 and 2). (The italics are ours).

DECREE REGARDING THE CARRYING OUT OF NECESSARY WORKS ON BEHALF OF THE GERMAN MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Recently workmen in various parts of the military zone have without reason refused to observe the regulations of the German military command with regard to carrying out necessary works, and thereby have done serious harm to their districts and their fellow-citizens.

To prevent this kind of thing happening, and by way of information to the public at large, I make the following orders:

1.—Any person who refuses to accept or continue work suited to his technical knowledge, *of advantage to the German military administration and required by the German military commanding officers*, will be sentenced

to not more than one year's imprisonment, in cases where he is capable of doing the work in question.

He may also be sent to Germany.

Appeal to any number of Belgian laws or even to international agreements will in no case justify refusal to work. The military commander alone will decide the propriety of the work required.

2.—Any person trying to incite another person to a refusal carrying the penalty set out in Article 1, either by pressure, threats, advice or other means, will be sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

3.—Any person encouraging, by giving relief or in any other way, a strike subject to penalties, will be sentenced to a fine not exceeding 10,000 marks, to which may be added a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year.

4.—Apart from the penalties laid down in Articles 1-3, forced contributions and other police measures may be decreed, if necessary, against districts in which work is refused without good reason shown.

5.—This decree comes into force at once.

Ghent, October 12, 1915.

Divisional Inspector von Unger,
Lieutenant-General.

This poster is not an isolated instance, since that at Ledeberg is dated December 16, 1915.

So now the German authorities had forged for itself a double weapon which would allow it on the one hand to make as many Belgian unemployed as it desired to have (decree of May 2, 1916), and on the other to break as it pleased the resistance of these compulsorily unemployed men to offers of German "war work" (decree of May 15, 1916). At the same time, to be able to lay hands on them, it had established by the same decree of May 15, 1916, the system of forced labour in Belgium, while biding its time to establish forced labour in Germany by the military decree of October 3, 1916.

3.—How the German Authorities Set to Work to Create Unemployment; the Example of the Province of Luxembourg.

The administration system inaugurated by the decree of May 2 and 15, 1916, began to be applied forthwith. We lack precise information as to individual prosecutions for refusal to work based on the second decree (May 15, 1916). But on the other hand, we have plenty as regards the treatment by the German authorities of the Belgian local bodies which had organised

relief works for unemployed (by enforcing the decree of May 2, 1916).

From that time onward very few "relief works" were authorised. Many undertakings which had been given out, contracted for, and put in hand, were stopped; soon (September, 1916) some works of general utility were forbidden on the pretext that they were relief works, or that the contractors employed workmen who had not been in their employ formerly. Henceforward, therefore, to be classed as "unemployed" it was sufficient merely to have changed one's trade or even one's workshop recently during the war.

The official excuses given for refusing systematically to permit "relief works" were: (1) their unproductiveness; (2) the fact that their cost was a burden too heavy for the finances of Belgian communes and provinces to bear.

What happened in the province of Luxembourg is a perfect example of the procedure followed. That province, given over almost entirely to agriculture and forestry, was one of those which had wisely taken precautions against unemployment by a fine organisation of "relief works." Assisted by the provincial committee for the relief and provisioning of Luxembourg (a provincial sub-department of the National Committee), which puts large sums at its disposal, the Belgian authorities in that province had set on foot local undertakings to the public advantage, and of incontestable utility, notably such as: the improvement and construction of farm and forest roads; the construction of public roads; the construction of aqueducts and paved water channels to cleanse and beautify districts; rendering marshy ground healthy; the afforestation and drainage of uncultivated public lands; the creation and repair of water supply systems; the creation of cemeteries; the building of dung-pits and tanks for liquid manure (sanitary works).

A memorandum drawn up in Belgium from unimpeachable information thus reports what happened after it had been decided to undertake this work:

> The committee's programme could have been carried out most successfully under the particular conditions existing in the province—a wide expanse of territory; a scattered and almost entirely agricultural population; and the need for carrying out certain work of primary importance which had been delayed or left undone through lack of resources.
>
> All the communes had received the committee's support, and, thanks to the subsidies allotted them, were carrying out undertakings, the details whereof had been first approved of by the permanent committee, and *ipso facto* sanctioned by the German authorities.

Some months after the new organisation had got to work, *the working classes had again become normally busy;* workmen found themselves freed from the disastrous results of idleness and able to earn a living wage by means that preserved their self-respect. Statistical returns dated August 31, 1915, show that, out of a grand total of 10,000 adult workmen and persons of working age, *only* 198 *had still to be assisted, and these cases are accounted for by accidents or sickness.*

During 1915 and the early part of 1916, the occupying Power, being unable to shut its eyes to the beneficial results of this system, put no difficulties in its way. But towards the beginning of June, 1916, in furtherance of a wish it was already showing to enlist Belgian labour for work of military importance (building railways, felling forests of timber required for trench work) it began to change its attitude. With a view no doubt to creating unemployment, it refused to countenance any fresh schemes submitted to the standing committee by local bodies, under the pretext that their usefulness was questionable.

Despite the slackening of work and the unemployment caused by these measures in some parts of the province, the occupying Power was not able to enrol the labour tnat it wanted, and the workmen, refusing the bait of high wages offered, refused to have anything to do with the undertakings in question.

This moment was chosen by the German authorities to bring about complete cessation of work in districts where they needed labour. An announcement made at a session of the permanent committee by the president of the civil administration declared formally the intention to oppose all attempts to assist workmen who had again become idle, and hinted that a scheme evolved by him would soon be brought into operation.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION AT THE SEPTEMBER SESSION (1916) OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE.

The suppression of local works does not involve the necessity for introducing unemployment relief.

Just as in peace time workmen used to seek work outside their country, in France, Lorraine and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, they can to-day earn good wages by doing work within their powers in the Grand Duchy and Lorraine, at a time when operations have been brought to a standstill in Belgian and French factories by the war and lack of raw materials.

It is certainly better for workmen to be engaged in the special trades and to keep in touch with their craft, and so be able when the war is over to assist in the general revival of employment in Belgian industries, than to continue to spend their time in public works of doubtful utility which subject the public purse to very heavy expenditure.

I have been in correspondence with a department engaged in finding work for industrial workers in order to ascertain whether it be possible to employ all workmen in the private factories of Lorraine and its adjacent provinces. This "German Industry Department" has assured me that it

is in a position to give all healthy workers from eighteen to forty years of age well paid employment suited to their capacity. I am convinced that this department will be as good as its word; if it is not, I would undertake to remind it very forcibly of its promise and would compel it, if need be, to find work for able-bodied workmen.

The districts will merely have to apply to the civil administration or to the employment bureaux or military headquarters, which will be responsible for passing the particulars along and will do what is needed to find berths for workmen in the shortest possible time, on a day to be fixed in the districts.

The contracts of the "German Industry Office" are binding for only four months, to make it possible for workmen to return to work in their own country when opportunity offers.

Provided that all workmen of from eighteen to fifty years of age be thus engaged in important work, I shall do nothing to prevent the communes organising works to occupy workers under eighteen and over fifty years, as well as invalid workers, if necessity demands.

On the other hand, civilian officials sent the communes the formal command, at first verbally but presently in writing, to stop the works, stating bluntly that these measures were taken to compel workmen to accept the offers made to them. The following are specimens* :

COPY OF A LETTER RECEIVED BY THE BURGOMASTER OF X . . .

No.

Arlon,
August 31, 1916.

All public road works, drainage schemes, etc., must be stopped immediately and be held up until I shall have definitely come to another decision. (*Signed*) MULLER.

DER ZIVILKOMMISSAR,
bei dem Kreischef,
IN AREL.

Arlon,
September 11, 1916.

No.

The X. District Council.

By order of the President of the Civil Council, in accordance with the Governor's decree of May 2, 1916, s. 2093, all public works in your district are forbidden, especially :

(*a*) *Road improvement at. . . .*

(*b*) *Road improvement No. . . .*

I herewith advise you of this and bring it to your notice that unemployed can be given work by the German Water and Forestry Board, and that they can find employment in industries and on railroad construction in and outside of the province.

(*Signed*) BUHLER.

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* In these specimens we omit individual numbers referring to the German indexes, also exact indications which, while of no advantage for our purpose, might be used by the German authorities as an excuse for "reprisals." *Author's Note.*

No.

Neufchâteau,
October 14, 1916.

The Burgomaster of Y . . .

In accordance with the decree of the Governor-General dated May 2, 1916, the President of the Civil Board of Arlon has authorised the works named below, on condition that only workers under 19 years and over 46 years of age are engaged thereon. (Here follows list of the works.)

I must advise you that you will be punished in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2 of the decree referred to above, should you fail to observe this condition.

(*Signed*) SCHWARTZ,
Civil Commissioner.

DER ZIVILKOMMISSAR,
bei dem Kreischef,
IN AREL.

Arlon,
October 25, 1916.

Z. District Council of . . .

The Civil Administrator of the Province of Luxembourg has made the following decision: As the list of unemployed persons in Z . . . includes a large number of skilled and experienced industrial workers, the German Board of Industries is about to employ these workers. Upon the success of these enrolments will depend whether and for how long certain useful (nützliebe) works at Z . . . . can be engaged in.

(*Signed*) WOESINGER.

No.

Neufchâteau,
October 28, 1916.

The Burgomaster of XXX . . .

The President of the Civil Board of Arlon advises you of the following decision:

The following works proposed by the District of XXX . . . and in some cases already in hand (here comes a list of various road works) are to be regarded as relief works, in accordance with the decree of the Governor-General dated May 2, 1916.

Under the provisions of that decree I forbid the district to carry out these works. I must advise you that your unemployed workmen have opportunities of finding full employment elsewhere, and herewith forward you a letter from the President of the Civil Board.

The Civil Commissioner,
(*Signed*) SCHWARTZ.

[Attached is a duplicate of the above-named communication from the President of the Civil Board to the permanent committee.]

These prohibitions, which nominally affected certain districts only, did not prevent workers finding employment in neighbouring districts in workshops which were still running. But a notice soon forbade their working outside their own district. We give as example a circular letter sent to the burgomaster.

DER ZIVILKOMMISSAR,
bei dem Kreischef,
IN NEUFCHÂTEAU.

Neufchâteau,
September 26, 1916.

No.

To the Burgomasters of YY . . .

Œffentlichen Arbeiten können auch in Zukunft nur dann zur Genehmigung weitergereicht werden, wenn Listen mit den Namen der zu beschäftigendem Arbeiter unter Angabe ihres Berufs und des Lohnsatzes beigelegt sind. Arbeiter aus fremden Gemeinden dürfen nicht zu Notstandsarbeiten herangezogen werden.

[I have to inform you that in future public works may not be submitted to the higher Board for approval unless accompanied by lists of the names of the workmen to be employed thereon, showing their trades and the total of wages. Workmen from outside districts may not be employed on emergency relief works.]

In this way the initial stages of compulsory unemployment were engineered. The measures soon attained large proportions, and orders to district councils to stop work were multiplied without any attempt to conceal their purpose.

(Type of Circular.)

MELDEAMT ARLON.

Mr. Burgomaster,

You are hereby requested to send to the Arlon Office of Information, within a week from date, a list of the unemployed in your district, drawn up in accordance with the example given below. You are to give very exact particulars therein of men following the trades of joiner, carpenter, blacksmith, locksmith, turner, quarryman, and other crafts.

Name.	Calling.	Number of Registration Card.	Whether Assisted or Not.	By whom assisted. Commune; Committee for Relief.
Ledant ...	Joiner ...	G.C. 741 ...	Yes ...	District and Committee for Relief

DER ZIVILKOMMISSAR,
bei dem Kreischef,
IN AREL.

Arlon,
No. October 14, 1916.

To the ZZ. District Council.

Please advise me, by the 18th inst. at latest, why you show in your list of unemployed only 18 persons, whereas actually there are from 180 to 200 unemployed in ZZ. (that is to say, persons not following their trades of two years ago).

In accordance with the enclosed circular of the Civil Administrator all public works are to be shut down at once.

You will probably be authorised to proceed with water supply schemes as soon as I receive the complete list of unemployed persons.

I must also remind you of the circular issued by the Civil Administrator concerning employment which the unemployed persons in your district will presently be able to find.

(*Signed*) WOESINGER.

HEADQUARTERS
at Athus.

Athus,
October 16, 1916.

To the Burgomaster of ZZ . . .

1. *I herewith request you to furnish me with a list of unemployed male persons in your district. Among unemployed must be included persons relieved by any official agency. Among these agencies the "Commission for Relief" must be included.*

2. *The list must be drawn up in accordance with the attached example, in six copies, and will cover the period ending October 16, 1916.*

3. *Alterations in the list of any kind whatever must be communicated to these military Headquarters every Sunday, beginning with October 27.*

4. *The lists are to be drawn up in form and arrangement like the example enclosed, and in a very legible manner.*

5. *The lists in columns 2 and 3 are to be forwarded every Sunday, commencing with October 27, 1916.*

(*Signed*) ROSE,
Commandant.

List of Unemployed in the Commune of . . . .

Number of Order.	Surname.	Christian Names.	Date of Birth.	Nationality.	Calling.	Pre-war Occupation.	Agency which gives Assistance.	Is Unemployment due to Illness or Infirmity?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(Type of Circular.)

Mr. Burgomaster.

You are herewith required to order the persons named in the attached list to present themselves at the Station Master's office in the station.

Should anyone fail to present himself at the place and time mentioned, he will be fetched by the military patrol, and be punished in addition.

Here one had to deal with a systematically applied scheme, without any possibility of remedying the troubles which resulted from it.

In reply to the many protests raised by members of the permanent committee and district representatives while these things were in progress, the German authorities tried to justify themselves by instancing their anxiety to protect public finance and by pretending that they were concerned only with works the need for which had not been proved. The list given below and the total of expenses incurred show, however, that, *thanks to the assistance of the National Committee*, the carrying out of these undertakings, most beneficial to the province, did not in any way injure local finances.

During the war the following work has been done :

The construction or improvement of 750 kilometres (470 miles) of parish roads, serving 18,000 hectares (45,000 acres) of forest land and 25,000 hectares (62,500 acres) of agricultural land.

The drainage of 625 hectares (1560 acres) of marshy ground, and the drawing up of schemes for draining 275 more hectares (687 acres).

The planting of 1100 hectares (2750 acres).

The construction of 3000 dung pits and cesspools, to the great advantage of public health and agricultural development.

The laying out of cemeteries.

Water supply schemes.

Stable improvements.

Many similar undertakings.

The works completed up to date have involved an expenditure of 9,540,000 francs, spent almost entirely in wages, to which public bodies—provincial, district and state—have had to contribute only 1,790,000 francs.

It was advisable to let the reader have, along with this Memorandum, some of the evidence attached to it by way of justification.

It will be noticed that the prohibition of relief works is in all cases accompanied by urgent offers of German industrial employment in such a way that the districts are subjected to thorough-going sweating and intimidation.

4.—The German Authorities, after Reducing Men to Idleness Transport them to Germany.

The plan followed by the German authorities is now so extremely obvious that it would be superfluous to insist on it.

The documents published above show clearly enough that the argument drawn from the unproductive nature of the works

undertaken is quite groundless. So, too, is the argument based on the pretension that direct or indirect relief given to unemployed was burdensome to the public authorities in the occupied parts of Belgium. Everyone in the latter knows—and it is necessary that neutral countries also should know it—that the funds set aside by the National Committee for Relief are to a large extent provided from many voluntary givers inside and outside occupied Belgium, so the expense thrown upon Belgian local boards is negligible. As for the German Administration, it has not contributed *a single centime* to the expenses of public charities in Belgium nor given any help whatever to men deprived of work by its own actions. The sums spent on helping unemployed persons amount to 10-12 million francs per month.

If there existed, as the German authorities allege, any necessity for sparing Belgian local finances, already grievously strained, the burden of fresh "unproductive" expenditure, why do those authorities continue to crush these same finances by a *permanent* war levy of 40 million francs per month, enforced in the first instance for one year, then "till further notice," though it can at any time be reduced or rescinded altogether?

Why, on November 20, 1916, did new orders increase from 40 to 50 millions of francs monthly this very contribution which the German Government itself had already (December, 1914) in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* declared to be the maximum amount that could be wrung from so thoroughly exhausted a country? (See the German Press of December 29, 1914, and the quotation from the *Freisinnige Zeitung* made in Chapter I. p. 51.)

This increase, be it noted, was laid on the provinces along with the obligation to provide the money for the indemnity *in the shape of loans*, and is almost exactly equal to the sums distributed monthly among the unemployed.

When making the two series of decrees of August 14 and 15, 1915, and May 2 and 15, 1916, the German authorities had only one end in view—to exclude Belgian labour entirely from employment on Belgian work; and to leave open to it only German factories and yards engaged on German war work. The direct purpose was to bring about general unemployment in Belgium and so have labour to enlist or deport.

The decrees of May 2 and 15 were in force four months only, a period long enough to paralyse the last attempt of the Belgian organisation and artificially make the problems of unemployment insoluble. So on October 3, 1916, there appeared the decree of German Great Headquarters which, pretending anxiety about

social conditions and a feeling of governmental responsibility, substituted a system of Belgian forced labour in Germany, for one of forced labour in Belgium.

This administrative comedy was now ended. It had reached its conclusion in three acts:

August 14-15, 1915...		Unemployment and refusal to work made a misdemeanor punishable by the Belgian Courts.
May 2-15, 1916	...	Restrictions on work in Belgium placed under the control of the German military authorities. Public works to relieve the unemployed practically forbidden.
October 3, 1916	...	General restrictions on work, with power to deport labour to Germany for employment there.*

* We have not thought it necessary to include, in our proof, a decree by Marshal von der Goltz, dated November 19, 1914 (*Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt*, No. 17, of December 1, 1914), which ran:

"Any person will be punished with imprisonment who attemp's by restraint, threats, persuasion, or other means, to hinder the carrying out of work done for the German authorities, by the persons appointed to furnish the labour, or by the contractors entrusted with the work by the German authorities"; and gave "the military courts sole jurisdiction to deal with misdemeanors committed under this head."

This decree was made, no doubt, to encourage the attempts of the German authorities to entice Belgian labour. But it is possible that at that time the scheme for a compulsory enrolment of all labour in occupied territories for the benefit of the economic military organisation of Germany has not yet been fully thought out, or at least not decided upon, as it had been by August, 1915.

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